

Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds



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Overview

'Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds' was a unique community engagement project undertaken by Leeds Civic Trust, hosted throughout the summer of 2021.

The purpose of the project was simple: we wanted to hear from the people who live, work, study or visit the metropolitan area of Leeds, to see how they think our bus services could become excellent. We wanted to hear from everyone and anyone in Leeds, whether they were regular bus users or, and perhaps more importantly, those who don't use the buses, to understand what would persuade more people to use the bus. We gathered this qualitative information through a competition of ideas, an online interactive map, an online perception survey, and a series of online discussion groups.

Across the survey and discussion groups, we found that the main factors which discourage people from using the current bus services are expensive fares; complicated ticketing; unreliable bus services; journey times that take too long; the buses being inconvenient for people; a lack of accessibility; a lack of frequent bus services; cleanliness of the vehicles, seats and bus stops/stations; and a lack of safety. Understanding the lived experiences of passengers and the factors which discourage them from using the bus services is vital for understanding how to improve the service and increase patronage.

Bringing together all the ideas submitted across the competition, interactive map, perception survey and discussion groups, our key overall findings were that people consider an excellent bus service to be:

- Reliable
- Frequent
- Quick
- Affordable
- Connected to the trains
- Safe
- Easy to use
- A pleasant experience
- Accountable
- Accessible for all
- Eco-friendly
- Comfortable

Within each of the above themes, the report details the ideas submitted by the general public. Within our interactive map and survey, our research also highlighted the areas within and around Leeds which need to be better connected to the bus service. These include access to greenspaces, leisure destinations, retail centres across Leeds, hospitals and railway stations. Participants also discussed excellent bus services from elsewhere around the UK and globally, and how their features could be replicated in Leeds.

Overall, this project highlights some short-, medium- and long-term improvements which could be implemented today. Some ideas are overarching and strategic, some are simple, low-cost solutions, but each would go a long way in creating an excellent bus service for Leeds.

1 Introduction

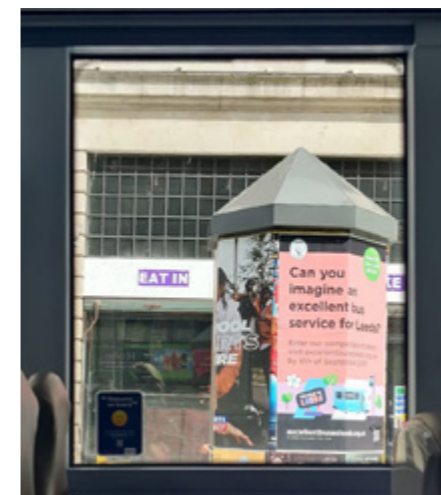
The Project

Throughout the summer of 2021, Leeds Civic Trust undertook a unique community engagement project which asked people to *'Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds'*.

We defined a 'bus service' as everything you imagine when thinking of a public bus: from the vehicles used and the roads they run on, their accessibility and connectivity (where they go and how often), and how they are managed (who owns the buses and who decides what sort of service should be provided).

The purpose of the project was simple: we wanted to hear from the people who live, work, study or visit the metropolitan area of Leeds, to see how they think our bus services could become excellent. We wanted to find out what the bus service could look like in the short-, medium- and long-term and what improvements would really benefit our communities and the people that the buses serve.

We wanted to hear from everyone and anyone in Leeds, whether they were regular bus users or, and perhaps more importantly, those who don't use the buses. We promoted the project through attending events such as the Age Proud Leeds festival, shared promotional leaflets throughout communities, advertised it through posters around the city centre and shared it on our monthly newsletter and social media. To gather this information, we wanted to understand the lived experiences of people in Leeds, starting a wider conversation about the quality of our bus service and encouraging some blue-sky thinking through collecting qualitative data by hosting the following activities.



i. A competition of ideas

We called for all ideas, big or small, to be submitted in any format to our competition. To encourage people and organisations to enter, we had a £2,000 cash prize fund on offer which we advertised on social media, on poster drums around the city, and on various online blogs and newspapers. In total, we received 60 entries to the competition, which varied from simple text submissions to detailed diagrams and essays. We were pleased to be joined by Dr Niels van Oort, Gem Turner and Thomas Ableman as guest judges to award the cash prizes – the first prize was awarded to [Anzir Boodoo for his informative poster on the Leo Express Omnibus](#), a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for Leeds (Appendix 1). To find out more about the competition and view all the winning entries, visit www.ExcellentBusesLeeds.org.uk/competition-of-ideas-2021.

ii. An online interactive map

The map was live on our website throughout the summer and can be viewed on <https://communities.createstreets.com/LeedsByBus>. This map saw 154 people tell us how they felt about the bus services in their local areas, what they liked or disliked about the buses and what improvements they'd like to see.

iii. An online perception survey

The survey asked people their views, perceptions and aspirations of the bus service. The survey was open throughout the summer and gathered a total of 440 responses from individuals around Leeds. See Appendix 2 for more information on participant demographics.

iv. A series of interactive online discussion groups.

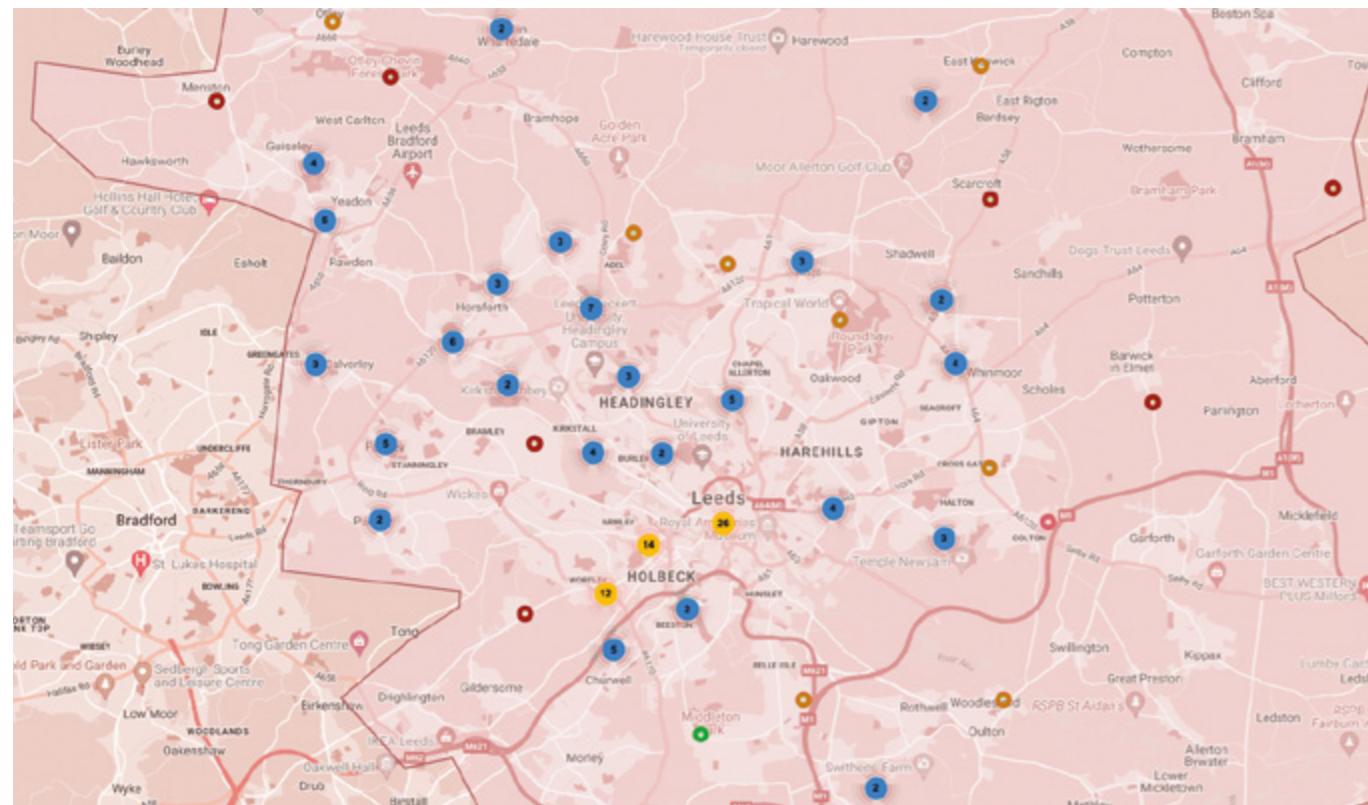
Adopting a workshop style format, these discussion groups elaborated on the questions in the survey and gave people a platform to share their ideas of improvements they'd like to see in the bus service. A total of 7 discussion groups were held with various community groups, stakeholders and interested citizens around Leeds, with the number of participants in each ranging from 5-10 people. Each discussion group was conducted online on Zoom, and we used Google Jamboard (an interactive online whiteboard, see Appendix 3 for an example) to share ideas and facilitate the discussion. Lasting roughly an hour each, these discussion groups were transcribed and thematically analysed by the facilitator.

A fundamental aspect of the project was to ignite a wider conversation with various communities in Leeds about realising the full potential of our bus service. It's fair to say we were astonished by not only the number of people who got involved in the project and the quantity of ideas we received, but the quality of the ideas put forward too.

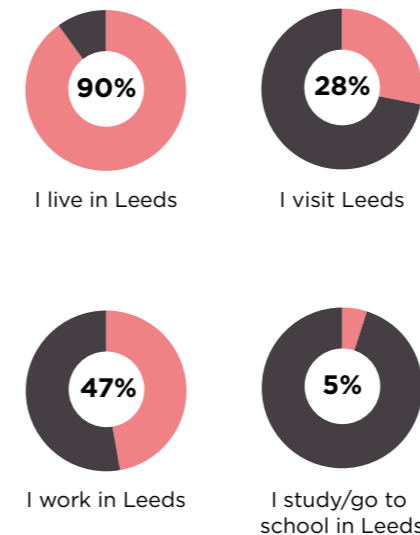
Although this project focussed on the metropolitan area of Leeds, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is the Local Transport Authority for the whole of West Yorkshire, and so has a coordinating role. **As such, many of the ideas put forward here in Leeds metropolitan area will still hold true for other cities, towns and villages across West Yorkshire.**

This report brings together ideas we gathered from the competition, survey, interactive map and discussion groups. Some ideas are small and simple, some have been implemented in Leeds in the past, and some are long-term strategic ideas. But we hope each idea will illustrate what the people of Leeds would like to get out of their local bus service and how it could, in their view, become excellent.

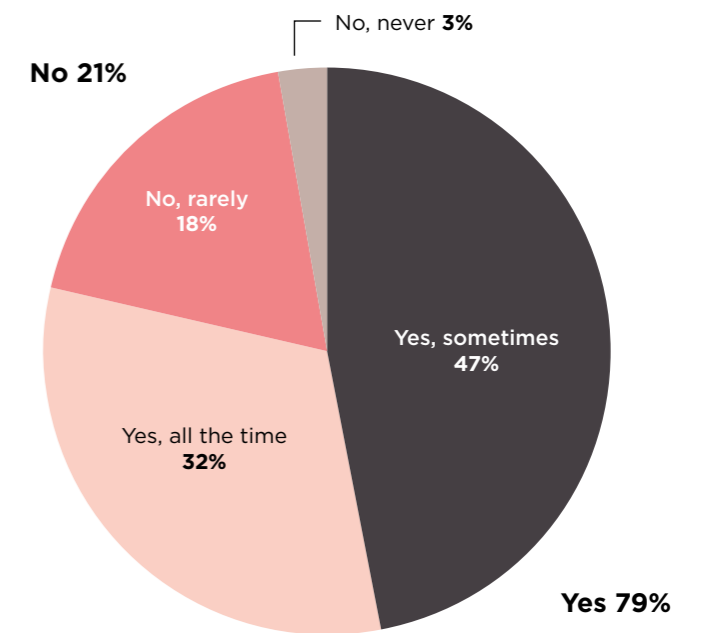
Our interactive map made with Create Streets:



Who answered our survey:



Do you use your local bus service(s)?



Leeds Civic Trust

Founded in 1965, the Leeds Civic Trust is a voluntary, non-political body, open to anyone who wants to participate in and influence the development of Leeds. We work with a variety of partners to improve Leeds as a place to live, work and play.



Our objectives are to:

- Stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and unique heritage of the city and metropolitan borough of Leeds including the identification and prioritisation of actions to preserve and enhance the historic built environment of Leeds.
- Encourage high quality sustainable development, promoting high standards of sustainable urban design, architecture and landscape in development across the whole of Leeds.
- Encourage the judicious preservation development and improvement of features of general public amenity within Leeds so as to ensure Leeds is a happy, healthy and sustainable place to live and work.
- Advance education in the appreciation of a people-friendly environment, considering climate change and the need to reduce environmental impacts; and to promote ways of improving the environment within Leeds including high quality green and public spaces, waterways and sustainable transport.

In line with these objectives, we seek to promote sustainable transport in the city. We do this by commenting on the city's transport policies and schemes and by developing our own proposals, as we are doing in this project. [Our Vision for 2020-2025](#)¹ for Leeds is to promote high quality sustainable development, making Leeds a great place to live and support a people-friendly environment.

In 2018, we published our new agenda for sustainable transport in Leeds in the form of a [Transport Vision](#)² which responds to the imperative of the climate emergency and has other big benefits including improving air quality, increasing road safety, enhancing street life, and improving public health through active travel. [Our Transport Vision](#)² and supporting case studies (below) can be found on the Leeds Civic Trust website.

- [Our Transport Vision](#)²
- [A Step Change](#)³
- [Public Transport](#)⁴
- [Sustainable Travel](#)⁵
- [Transport and Development](#)⁶
- [Technology and the Environment](#)⁷
- [Vehicular Traffic](#)⁸

Leeds Civic Trust is an independent body that does not operate buses, nor does it have any political affiliation. We do not stand to gain financially from this project. Our aim for this work is simply to gain a better understanding of how the buses in Leeds could be improved.

This final report gathers the ideas and suggestions which have been put forward in the consultation. Throughout, the project has been managed by members of the Transport and Liveable Leeds group at the Leeds Civic Trust. This report and the proposals will be publicly available and shared with the WYCA which is the Local Transport Authority, Leeds City Council (LCC), bus operators and other interested parties.

The Current Bus Service

Public transport in Leeds largely consists of our rail and bus networks, with each of them playing a separate role in how our transport operates⁹.

As Leeds is the biggest city in Europe without a metro or a tram system¹⁰, buses are particularly important here, especially in the short-term whilst a mass transit system is still currently being developed. In Leeds, 63 million trips per year are made by bus, yet there has been a 10% reduction in bus patronage since 2000⁹.

According to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's (WYCA) [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#), bus patronage in West Yorkshire has declined drastically with the number of bus trips falling from around 170 million in 2009 to around 144 million in 2018/2019¹¹. In fact, passenger journeys per head of population are decreasing at an even faster rate in West Yorkshire than the average across England¹¹.

The Leeds Civic Trust and its members believe that the following factors explain some of the reasons as to why bus patronage has declined in recent years:

- Bus de-regulation in 1986 meant that Leeds and West Yorkshire do not control the bus routes, frequencies, fares and information, unlike in London where buses and trains operate through Transport for London. The Trust believes that there is a potential tension for privatised bus companies in West Yorkshire, between maximising profit and market share versus increasing bus use overall.
- Rising traffic congestion has led to longer bus journey times⁹, making the bus service unreliable and slow. This, alongside an increase in bus journey fares, has created a stark comparison to the relatively low financial and personal cost of motoring⁹.

- Although First Bus operate the majority of the bus services running regularly throughout Leeds and the surrounding area (approximately 60 services)¹², the Leeds City Bus Network has complex and varying fares, and is difficult to understand.
- Public funding on bus services was cut by 36% between 2010 and 2018 in West Yorkshire¹³ and therefore reduced overall bus mileage, with evening and Sunday services especially low.
- The 'Leeds Motorway City of the 70s' which resulted in a car-centric highway system⁹ has contributed to poor pedestrian access to buses and overly-complicated bus routes.
- Many people in Leeds have free workplace parking available, which makes using the bus less attractive than driving.
- Most services focus on the city centre, meaning that you often have to get a bus into the city centre and out again if you want to travel east to west or north to south (see Appendix 4).

Yet, in other cities and regions the bus services have been successful in increasing bus patronage and reducing vehicular traffic:

- In Jersey, where they introduced a franchising model in 2013 to LibertyBus, ridership increased 38% between 2012 and 2017¹⁴. With affordable fares for all journeys, a simple 'London Underground-style' map and easy to digest timetables, Jersey demonstrates how being car-free is a realistic option when the buses are effective¹⁵.

- In Nottingham, Nottingham City Transport (NCT) is the first operator in the UK to be crowned UK Bus Operator of the Year five times¹⁶. Unlike other most other bus companies, NCT is not privately owned. It is a municipal company owned by Nottingham City Council, which uses the profits to help fund other council services. As such, Nottingham has developed one of the best integrated public transport networks outside of London. Conducting 50 million passenger trips per year (2018/2019), NCT has one of the highest Passenger Satisfaction ratings in the country – 95% in 2019¹⁷.

Transport contributes up to 40% of the carbon emissions in Leeds, and since the declaration of the Climate Emergency in 2019 it's clear that we need to take action to reduce these emissions⁹. Just one bus can take over 30 cars off our roads⁹. In Leeds we have no tram, trolleybus or underground and, even if we did, buses would still be needed. We can't wait for these alternatives to become available before we take action. We must take steps to improve the bus services that we already have.

Transport contributes up to 40% of the carbon emissions in Leeds

But there are some encouraging policy recommendations and strategies underway in Leeds.

- The Leeds City Council [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy](#) has a target of growing the number of bus passengers by 130% over the next 20 years⁹. This means buses need to carry 82 million more passengers per annum by 2030. The accompanying Connecting Leeds [Action Plan](#) sets out the short term measures until 2024 to help Leeds achieve the vision of being 'a city where you don't need a car'.
- The launch of the new National Bus Strategy for England, [Bus Back Better](#) in March 2021 made it clear that the scale of improvements necessary will require different ways of delivering bus services¹⁴. At the time of writing this report, the WYCA works with the bus operators (including First, Arriva and Transdev) through the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance which was formed in 2019.
- In response to the new [National Bus Strategy](#)¹⁴ and the allocation of £3 billion towards improving the bus services throughout England, WYCA is currently working with bus operators to develop a [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) (BSIP)¹¹. The BSIP sets out the strategy and key initiatives they want to deliver to achieve better buses in West Yorkshire. To achieve this, the current Bus Alliance will be the basis of an Enhanced Partnership – a statutory partnership between the WYCA and bus operators.

- The appointment of Tracy Brabin as the first Mayor of West Yorkshire in May 2021 brought West Yorkshire franchising powers as a Mayoral Combined Authority under the [2017 Bus Service Improvement Act](#)¹⁸. Tracy Brabin pledged to bring buses back under public control, introduce simpler fares, contactless ticketing and greener buses¹¹. As such, WYCA are also exploring the option of franchising the bus service in West Yorkshire, according to the [BSIP](#) submitted in October 2021¹¹.
- The Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) bid has been developed in collaboration with all three major bus operators (Arriva, First and Transdev) and puts forward a proposal to deliver 121 new zero emission electric buses in WY¹¹, increasing the proportion of zero emission buses in WY from 1% to 10%¹⁹. As poor air quality in West Yorkshire accounts for 1 in 20 deaths¹¹, urgent action must be taken.

The following section sets out some of the key questions asked as part of our survey and some of the key responses.

2 What discourages people from using the bus?

Across the survey and discussion groups, we began with the fundamental question of asking people what, if anything, discourages them from using the current bus service.

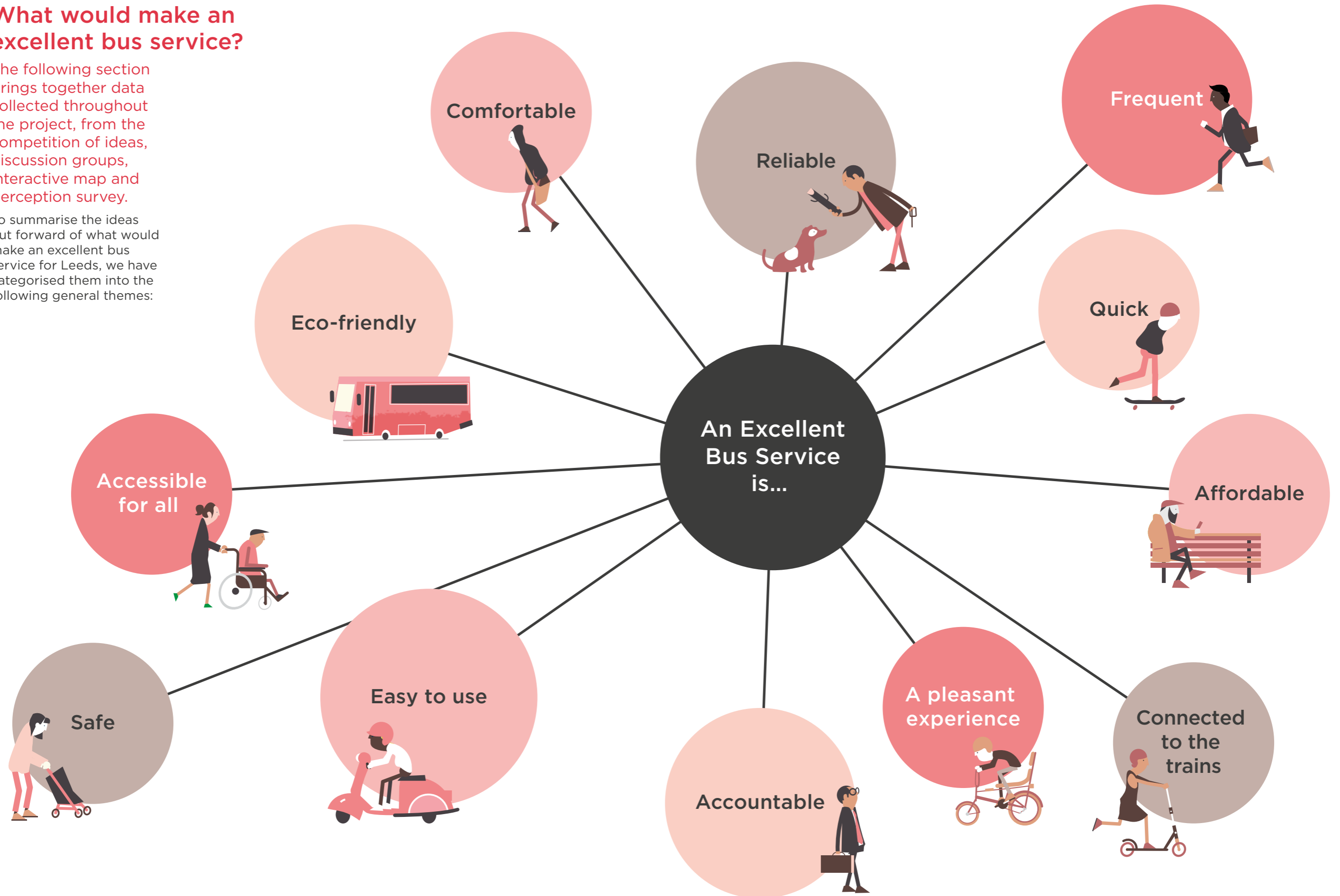
Knowing what factors discourage people from using the current bus service is integral for understanding what aspects need to be improved. The following table shows the most common themes that came across from this question in the survey and discussion groups, listed in no particular order of relevance.

Expensive Fares	41% of survey respondents mentioned that expensive fares discourages them from using the bus. With cases of people paying £2.70 to only travel 4 stops or having to buy multiple tickets across different operators, the perception and reality of expensive fares drastically discourages people from taking the bus.
Complicated Ticketing	Not knowing how much a ticket will cost, or whether you should pre-buy them, is a key deterrent for those who do not know how to use the bus. Especially with various operators requiring different ticket types, you shouldn't need 'inside knowledge' just to be able to hop on the bus.
Unreliable Services	32% of survey respondents noted that they cannot truly depend on a bus to get them to their destination on time. Several factors influence this, from poor communication with passengers of cancelled or delayed buses, to congested roads slowing down bus journeys and causing frustrations.
Journey times taking too long	As a result of the time taken to get people to board/alight and pay for their tickets, buses stopping unnecessarily or delays due to congestion, journeys are longer, causing stress and anger. Poorly planned bus routes are a particular problem in Leeds, with what could be a 10 minute car journey taking over an hour on the bus being a common occurrence.
The buses are inconvenient	Several factors reduce a person's 'convenience' when it comes to transport choice, such as having to change buses several times on a short journey, or having to walk a great distance to/from the bus stop.
Accessibility	Whether you have mobility issues, are carrying your shopping or bringing a pram on board, not knowing whether you'll be able to access the bus is a key issue for passengers. Not to mention it causing some seriously awkward situations, e.g. if your wheelchair doesn't fit on board.
Frequency	The lack of frequent services (or in some cases, a complete lack of buses) makes using the bus completely inconvenient for people. Whether using the bus for a night out or to make an appointment at a specified time, a lack of frequent buses can make a short trip much longer than necessary. Ultimately, a lack of buses can significantly limit people's social interactions, isolating communities and increasing levels of loneliness.
Cleanliness	The general cleanliness of the vehicles, seats and bus stops/stations which would provide people with a comfortable journey is also a deterrent if it is not up to standard. The cleanliness of the vehicle from a Covid standpoint is also another specific issue.
Safety	From feeling safe enough to stand alone in a bus shelter to feeling safe on the bus in terms of Covid precautions, the safety of all passengers should be of paramount importance and not a factor in discouraging people from using the bus.

3 What would make an excellent bus service?

The following section brings together data collected throughout the project, from the competition of ideas, discussion groups, interactive map and perception survey.

To summarise the ideas put forward of what would make an excellent bus service for Leeds, we have categorised them into the following general themes:



The following section elaborates on these themes, in no particular order of relevance. People's ideas, experiences and suggestions are drawn from all the projects data collection methods: the perception survey, discussion groups, competition of ideas and interactive map.

We recognise that a few of the ideas suggested may be unrealistic, may have already been trialled or may already be in place in Leeds. However, by nature of the core aim of this project, we encouraged anyone (not just those with in-depth transport knowledge) to put forward any idea, big or small, radical or tactical.



Reliable

Several factors go into what people consider a 'reliable' bus service, including having faith that the bus will firstly arrive on time (or if at all!), that it will take you to your destination on time and that it will provide an overall comfortable journey. Traffic congestion, road works, bus driver shortages, adverse weather or overcrowded buses can cause delays and cancellations. Often, these delays and cancellations are uncontrollable, but communicating clearly with passengers and managing their expectations goes a long way for the bus user.

The most popular idea submitted to our competition was to have a centralised smartphone app and website where passengers can access all the information they need to travel. According to Josh Peart, one of the many competition entrants who suggested an app, **"delays cannot be prevented at times, but the way passengers react can be"**.

Collating the ideas put forward, some key features suggested for the app were:

- Real time information on where each bus is so that people can track each bus location and route, such as on Map - bustimes.org or similar to how the Uber app functions.
- Live updates on whether a bus is delayed or cancelled stating how long and the cause of the delay/cancellation, similar to the Trainline app journey tracker.

- Live information on traffic conditions for the journey.
- Real time information on how crowded the bus is, with colours or a traffic light system to indicate if there are any seats available.
- The ability to buy mobile tickets (as a QR code) and view the options for various ticket prices, discounts and passes.

In the competition, Joseph Eadie even suggested allowing people to reserve seats on the app, eliminating slow queues for the buses and then accurately reporting remaining seats available on the bus. **"Doing this not only allows users to have space on required travel, but also will allow buses to operate like other forms of travel e.g. trains and coaches"**.

A common suggestion was that information on live departure times, route maps and timetables should be available at all bus stops to a high standard. That is, electronic information screens with reliable updates on how far away the bus is and updates on any delays/cancellations; information buttons which are clear to hear and timetables/route maps which are easy to understand.

As a bus user from Cookridge stated a reliable service is a safe service, as **"I don't want to be left stranded because the last bus doesn't turn up"**. A reliable bus service also means that less time needs to be spent waiting in bus stops and personal routes can be planned more accurately.

"I don't want to be left stranded because the last bus doesn't turn up"

Bus user from Cookridge



Frequent

A frequent bus service helps to create a reliable bus service. Knowing that, if you've missed the bus, another will arrive in 10 minutes gives passengers more faith in using the service.

"We need more frequent services to the outskirts, with priority given to outlying areas when buses are cancelled – a cancellation on a service which is only every 30 minutes has far more effect than a cancellation on an every 10 minute service close to the centre of Leeds where other nearby routes are available" (bus user from Middleton).

"I am 87. On my estate there is a bus but it only runs every hour and not in the evenings and weekends. If I was going into the town centre, I might be able to organise catching a bus into town but even this is doubtful if I have a fixed appointment and it is impractical for the return unless I was very lucky on timing. For evening and weekend travel it is impossible. It is also impossible for many of my local needs such as Sainsbury or my surgery, and although it does go through Moortown corner it is impractical for me to have to wait up to an hour for a bus home. The nearest main route bus is a 15-20 minute walk and my abilities are limited to walk any distance" (non-bus user from Shadwell).

The most common suggestion was to provide more frequent services in the evenings, weekends and holidays which should be at least every 10 minutes.

A bus user from Harrogate suggested that Leeds needs to

"Make it more practical to use the bus at night so more people will be using them. Buses normally end before music performances – especially if it's going to take 2 buses to get home".

Several others agreed, stating that later buses should be more frequent after concerts and events e.g. at the Playhouse, First Direct Arena and Elland Road. Furthermore, a common answer when we asked bus users "Why do you choose to use the bus?" was the freedom the bus gave them to have an alcoholic drink without having to worry about driving.

A competition entry from James Riley suggested using Demand Responsive Transit (DRT) to provide a night service. **"DRT can help reduce operational costs and make an attractive alternative to car usage. At the moment, Leeds has no night bus network in comparison to cities of a similar size on Continental Europe as well as London and Nottingham. A night-time transit system can bring many benefits to the city of Leeds through enhancing the growing night time economy within the centre of Leeds, also providing key workers safe and reliable transport, public transport they deserve. The DRT service allows for passengers to book their transport using a website, application (MaaS), or a telephone to book a ride to and from bus stops or designated pick up / drop off points. Multiple minibuses can be deployed picking up several passengers on a selected route that has been calculated to be the most efficient route with the bookings made. The DRT has been successful in connecting rural areas within Teesside, Merseyside and North Yorkshire but has never been deployed within a metropolitan area to serve unsociable hours, in which I believe Leeds should be pioneering."**



Quick

A fundamental aspect of what a bus service should provide is getting people from A to B as quickly as possible. To generally speed up journey times, people suggested:

- Having multiple doors on all buses to speed up passengers boarding and alighting.
- Buses should become cashless and contactless to become more efficient at getting people on board quicker – for those few passengers who do use cash, ticket machines should be at busy bus stops, main bus/train stations and shopping districts where people could pay with cash and print timetables.
- Improving bus priority on the roads through more ‘bus only’ routes, dedicated bus lanes and guideways and provision of traffic light and junction priority for both buses and cyclists – in the winning [competition entry](#), Anzir Boodoo highlights potential roads in Leeds which could prioritise buses through guideways and reallocating road space (Appendix 1).
- Melanie Chan even suggested in our competition to **“use a fleet of small shuttle buses, called shopper hoppers, which offer a 10 minute regular service to main supermarkets for a flat fee of £2 or £3 e.g. in LS10 a shuttle service could operate between Hunslet District Centre (Morrisons supermarket) and Middleton shopping centre (Asda).”**

- Competition entrant Kris Heath suggested that **“when buses are running late, e.g. by 10 minutes, we could stop taking fares and checking the passes – which would save time and allow the bus to catch up. This would also provide people with good value for money as it would cost £0 to implement. Money would be lost on fares, but this would incentivise buses to keep to times.”**

A key issue in Leeds is the lack of orbital routes which connect the suburbs without having to go into the city centre (Appendix 4). For example: **“Volunteering in Moortown / Chapel Allerton is difficult by bus without going into town and back out again – more than double the distance from my home in Lawnswood, and many times longer than the 15 minute car journey. I would happily use the bus, if a more direct service existed with reliable connections at suitable times.”**

Many people commented that routes such as the number 91 from Pudsey Bus Station to Halton Moor (which should become more frequent), is a good example of a suburb to suburb route and could be replicated across other parts of the city. The general consensus was clear: we need more orbital bus routes around Leeds.



Affordable

The overwhelming majority of responses agreed that the current bus fares are too expensive. Examples include people paying £2.70 to only travel four stops, £20 for a day return for two people to Harrogate from North Leeds and a bus journey of 3 miles from Bramhope to Otley costing £4 there and back.

“My decision to take my car over the bus is usually dictated by cost – I’d rather spend £8 on car parking rather than x2 day riders and have the convenience of being able to come and go in our own time” (non-bus user from Hyde Park).

As it stands, unless you buy a more expensive Metro pass, tickets between different bus operators are not interchangeable, which can become extremely costly if you’re travelling across Leeds. The majority of people suggested a London-style, price-capped contactless ticketing system where you ‘tap in’, and you can change to any bus (or operator!) in the hour for a low price.



Another popular idea was to incentivise people to travel on the bus through providing group discounts, making the bus a valid option in comparison to the car or a taxi:

- Robert McGee who entered the competition suggested **“the council should be confident that once people try the bus, they won’t go back to the car so once someone has completed 100 bus journeys (as monitored via the app on their phones) they will get 10 free”.**
- **“Advertise promotions more like 5 for £5”** (bus user from Yeadon).
- Or a non-bus user from Rawdon who suggested that they should **“promote more family tickets which are heavily discounted to encourage more people with children”.**
- A non-bus user from Horsforth said **“Cost is another issue, particularly if you have children, it can be more expensive to get the bus than it can be to get a taxi”.**
- Penelope Milner’s competition entry suggested **“To make it an incentive for students to use the buses, there could be a points system introduced. For every bus journey, points could be awarded. The points could be spent in shops, restaurants etc. in Leeds participating in the scheme. This would encourage people to spend money on the high street and help shops to recover from the financial implications of the pandemic”.**
- [Paras Shah](#) also suggested that **“Park and Ride stations should have a special consideration in price that creates a ‘combi’ ticket for both parking and using the bus [to and around town]”** and that the **“Fare should be fair, and should be promoted as #FairFares”.**

- To encourage more young people to travel by bus, several people suggested allowing free bus travel for children and young people as seen in London.

Alternatively, could Leeds have a completely fare-free bus service? Adopting the case put forward by Our Future Leeds in their [competition entry](#), Leeds could follow in the footsteps of cities such as Luxembourg or Tallinn and provide free bus travel for all its residents and visitors. Even in Manchester there are three city centre routes which are fare-free, connecting areas to main train and tram stations. In Harrogate, some routes operate fare-free each Sunday to encourage people onto the bus.

“I think making it free would entice car drivers onto the bus and to realise how they can make it work and would also be very supportive to people who don’t have cars. It would also encourage people to explore new bits of the city – including parks, green space and sports centres. I’ve lived in Leeds for 25 years and have children but I’ve never visited the John Charles stadium because it would take two buses to get there whereas I used to regularly swim at Leeds Central pool. Two bus journeys there and two back is too much for a short trip out on a regular basis with children.” (bus user from Potternewtown).



Connected with the trains

Although buses are important, they are often only one component of the wider transport system. In Leeds, buses need to connect efficiently to the train services already available to make travelling across the city easier.

The most popular idea for this was the ability to buy an on-bus ticket which a person could use on both the train and bus (and any future Mass Rapid Transit). Although this option is already available with the Metro MCard, it clearly is not currently advertised broadly enough for bus users. Allowing people to have the option of how they could travel, for example **“It would be great if I could maybe have one affordable ticket where I could choose to get the train to work in the morning and maybe get the bus back in the evening – depending on what I fancy”** (bus user from Burley).

Beyond that, several ideas were put forward in the survey, focus groups and competition on how to integrate the services better, including:

- Having the ability to buy train and bus tickets at both train and bus stations.
- Having display screens of live departures for buses and trains inside both stations.
- Aligning bus and train timetables so that they are better connected.
- Making the connection between the Leeds City Train and Bus Stations simpler, e.g. through having a marked pedestrian route and maps at each station, or a free bus service connecting the two.



Safe

In our survey, we asked people to rate how safe they felt when using the bus service from 0 (not safe at all) to 10 (extremely safe). The resultant overall Net Promoter Score (NPS) of -8% shows that more can be done to make people feel safer whilst using bus services.

When we broke these figures down into the gender demographics, we saw that those who identified as female felt even less safe, with a NPS score of -15%. On the other hand, those who identified as male had a resultant overall score of 2%.

As previously mentioned, a reliable bus service works to create a safer bus service. As stated by a bus user from Morley **“When the last bus is suddenly cancelled it leaves people feeling extremely vulnerable”**. Another bus user from Tinshill said we need **“...a reliable service which stops you from waiting for long periods at a bus stop, especially at night. If you can turn up at the stop as the bus is almost due it is comfortable; if it is a 20 or 30 minute wait, especially if alone, this can become alarming”**.

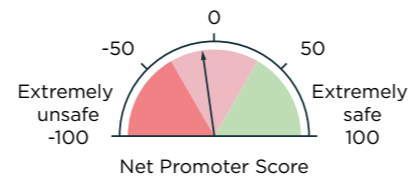
The most common answer we received when asked what could be done to improve general safety was to have more, clearly advertised CCTV covering all stages of a bus journey. James Riley who entered the competition even suggested playing a live feed of the CCTV footage on the bus LCD displays, which would **“help deter criminal and anti-social activity on the network”**.

Furthermore, several people commented on making sure there is high quality lighting on all buses, shelters and interchanges to make people feel safer.

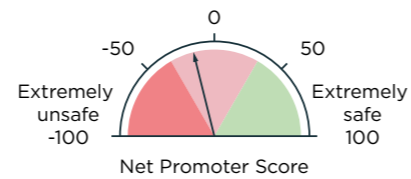
Another popular idea was to re-introduce bus conductors/inspectors/marshals, particularly on night buses to manage passengers, antisocial behaviour and general safety. According to a student in Leeds who regularly uses the bus **“I think conductors should be reinstated as drivers have enough responsibility driving a big vehicle and contending with traffic without having to deal with problem passengers”**. Another bus user from Holbeck stated **“I think that it would improve a feeling of safety on buses both in terms of anti-social behaviour late at night as well as Covid safety if buses had conductors on them again”**.

A bus user from Moor Allerton suggested that general overall safety could be improved with greater awareness of the safety protocols already in place. For example, if an incident were to happen on a bus journey, all passengers should know instantly what the security protocol is: who to contact, who is in charge/whether the driver is responsible, what CCTV there is, and so on. A bus user from South East Leeds even suggested a panic button for passengers in case of an emergency to alert the driver/authorities.

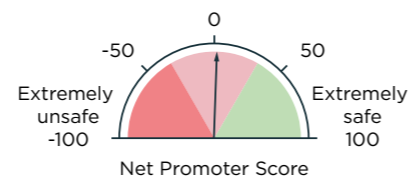
Several people also suggested having seat belts installed on buses, giving people the option of using them if they feel to do so. Another common answer, particularly from those with accessibility issues, was to make sure that bus drivers do not set off before all the passengers (especially those who have just got on board) find a seat.



-8% Overall



-15% Female



2% Male

“When the last bus is suddenly cancelled it leaves people feeling extremely vulnerable.”

Bus user from Morley



Easy to Use

From being able to buy tickets, understand timetables or apply for a concessionary bus pass, the bus services should be easy for everyone and anyone to use. Again, creating the centralised app and website was the most common suggestion to make the service simpler to use and plan journeys.

Competition entrant Gareth Brown proposed an idea that was highly commended by the judges: clearly naming each bus stop so that passengers know when to alight. According to Gareth **“A key deterrent for infrequent bus passengers is knowing which stop to alight. If you are unfamiliar with a route or the destination area it is very difficult to know which stop to use. This issue is exacerbated by all bus stops looking identical and having the bus stop name not visible from the bus. There is no such issue on Mass Transit since every halt is stopped at and each is clearly marked. With a bus, not every stop is part of the route and some stops aren't stopped at depending on demand. Therefore, my idea is to clearly mark every bus stop with the bus stop name. In large font and visible from both decks. Furthermore local artwork could be added with the new signage to further make each stop more identifiable. This was seen recently with the temporary halts on the Headrow. I think this idea would convince more infrequent users to be more confident in using the bus. Often in the dark or when visiting somewhere infrequently it is hard to know which stop to get off at”**.

[Paras Shah](#) who entered the competition with a detailed report even suggested that Leeds could be the first city in the UK to roll out a ‘public transport and travelling’ module at schools, to encourage more young people to use the bus service and explain (from a young age) how to use the bus.

Several people also commented on how the advertising and marketing of essential information such as prices and routes should be clear, consistent and transparent. For example, one disabled bus user discussed her confusion when paying for a bus ticket: **“there was an occasion where I got too scared to ask how much a [bus ticket] was – because it's just kind of an assumed knowledge of like well if you're getting the bus everyday then you should know how much it is? But I forget? You can tell the bus driver was thinking ‘I literally saw you yesterday why are you asking me this again’ it was so embarrassing.”**

Many people also suggested to have clear and consistent branding across all the buses in Leeds, regardless of the operator. A popular idea was to base this branding around the Owl, having a uniform fleet of buses which would provide a sense of identity to Leeds and its residents.

“A key deterrent for infrequent bus passengers is knowing which stop to alight.”

Gareth Brown





A pleasant experience

Buses are often a great way to get around, see the city and explore new places. As a bus user from Roundhay shared **“If I’m going into Leeds and I have plenty of time, I’ll travel off-peak and enjoy sitting upstairs ‘sight-seeing’”**.

Making sure that people have a pleasant experience when using the bus is clearly important to increase bus patronage, and bus drivers play an important role in that. As mentioned by a bus user from Saxton Gardens **“there’s not a specific bus journey that comes to mind that I’ve particularly enjoyed, but the best ones have always very much been down to the driver”**. A commuter from Shadwell showed how integral bus drivers are in people’s decision making, stating in the survey that **“[the] first time I used the bus when Covid restrictions eased slightly last April, I experienced a very rude driver (which I did complain about) which put me off using them again”**.

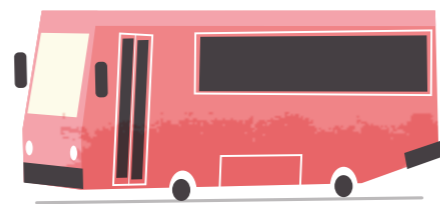
Ensuring that all bus drivers are happy to see passengers and have excellent customer service was a popular suggestion across the project. This could be achieved through having set industry standards and regular training. In particular, providing bus drivers with adequate people management skills, diversity awareness training and a zero tolerance policy towards harassment, rudeness or bullying.

This would particularly benefit users who may need assistance accessing the bus.

“The only gripe I would have is that I’ve noticed that drivers seem exasperated when having to get out and put the ramp down so that I can get the wheelchair on the bus. I’d say maybe 8 or 9 times out of 10 the drivers are great, you know, not a problem, they just get out and help you do it... but you can always just tell that one driver who may have just worked a really long shift/day, and get out, huff, and put the ramp down... I’m just trying to get to Tesco, you know? Other than that, I really appreciate the service” (Disabled bus user from Headingley)

Another disabled bus user from Holbeck shared in a discussion group **“it seems as though the bus drivers either don’t expect me to be there, or don’t want me to be there... they go through their day hoping that they don’t actually have to stop, and get out, and put out a ramp, and put a wheelchair on, and put back the ramp, and get back in... and the reason I say this is because you can tell when they’re sat comfortably in the seat and they’ve got a water bottle, maybe a snack, they’ve got their coat and they’re kind of tucked in there... and then what happens is they see me, or someone else who needs to get on the bus, and then it becomes ‘a thing’ because they have to move everything, re-arrange themselves, and they were unprepared for it and they have to put on their masks now because of Covid and get out shut the door and go through the whole thing... and I think that, you know, there’s a lot of steps to that, and I think that clearly when they have already been through their bus routine and are sat comfortably ready for the journey ahead, that’s why they get a bit huffy sometimes when I’m throwing that wrench into their everyday routine.”**

Therefore, more training for staff members to lessen attitudinal barriers would be extremely beneficial for all bus users.



Accountable

When we asked in our survey “Do you know who runs the bus service(s) in Leeds and how they are funded?” the answer was split: 50% of respondents said ‘No’ and 50% said ‘Yes’ they did. But regardless of how the bus services are run, they need to be accountable, especially when buses get cancelled, delayed or people have a poor experience.

Jolanta Pemierny who entered our competition suggested **“Introduce a proper bus complaints body and implement fines for constant cancellations and poor service. At the moment, there isn’t much you can complain to and bus companies don’t take you seriously...In the past when I complained about poor service, it took forever and never got the compensations that were offered. Even if the companies are private, they should still be accountable and efficient and effective ways of complaining and applying for fines.”**

Reece Potter’s idea submitted to the competition was to collect data on fares, usage and passenger experience through setting up a travel experience on the centralised app where you could rank your journey from 0 to 5 stars, with the ability to add in a short description. By collecting regular data of customer satisfaction, experiences and concerns, direct improvements could be made to the bus service and specific lines.



Accessible for all

An excellent bus service is one that can be used by anyone. Accessibility should never be a barrier to bus users, whether they have a disability, or even if they need space for e.g. luggage, prams or shopping. This was shared by a bus user from Headingley **“Unfortunately, I can’t use the bus for food shopping because I could not manage it with the lack of space on the bus.”**

Several people suggested adopting principles of universal design to make the bus service accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors. Some suggestions included:

- All buses should have two door entry-exit systems to improve the flow and speed of passenger boarding.
- Level boarding: **“There are places, like on York Road, where with the guided busway, the bus pulls up to the curb absolutely level meaning that a ramp isn’t needed – it would be really nice if there were a lot more places like that because that would speed up boarding times because it’s all level and really close already”** (Disabled bus user from Alwoodley).

- Audio announcements on all bus services announcing the ‘next stop’ and any other important information, such as changes connecting to train stations, shopping centres, park and rides and other bus routes
- Visual announcements both on buses to show ‘next stop’ and in bus shelters to show the next bus.
- Several people also suggested replacing the traditional double decker buses with single level buses, as shown in the winning competition entry by [Anzir Boodoo with the Leo Bus Rapid Transit proposal](#).

“If I’m going into Leeds and I have plenty of time, I’ll travel off-peak and enjoy sitting upstairs ‘sight-seeing.”

Bus user from Roundhay





Eco-friendly

When we asked those who do use the buses why they choose to do so, a popular answer was that they are trying to make an environmentally conscious decision, particularly to reduce CO₂ emissions and congestion.

The most common idea put forward to make our buses more eco-friendly was to ensure that our buses are powered as sustainably as possible, either from green generated electricity or, where needed (especially for large double-decker buses), a combination of electricity and bio-gas/hydrogen gas.

[Penelope Milner's competition entry](#) focussed specifically on sustainability, with ideas such as installing solar panels to power the lighting on the buses and 'green roof' panels to regulate the temperature of buses, ensuring that the new buses make as little environmental damage as possible.

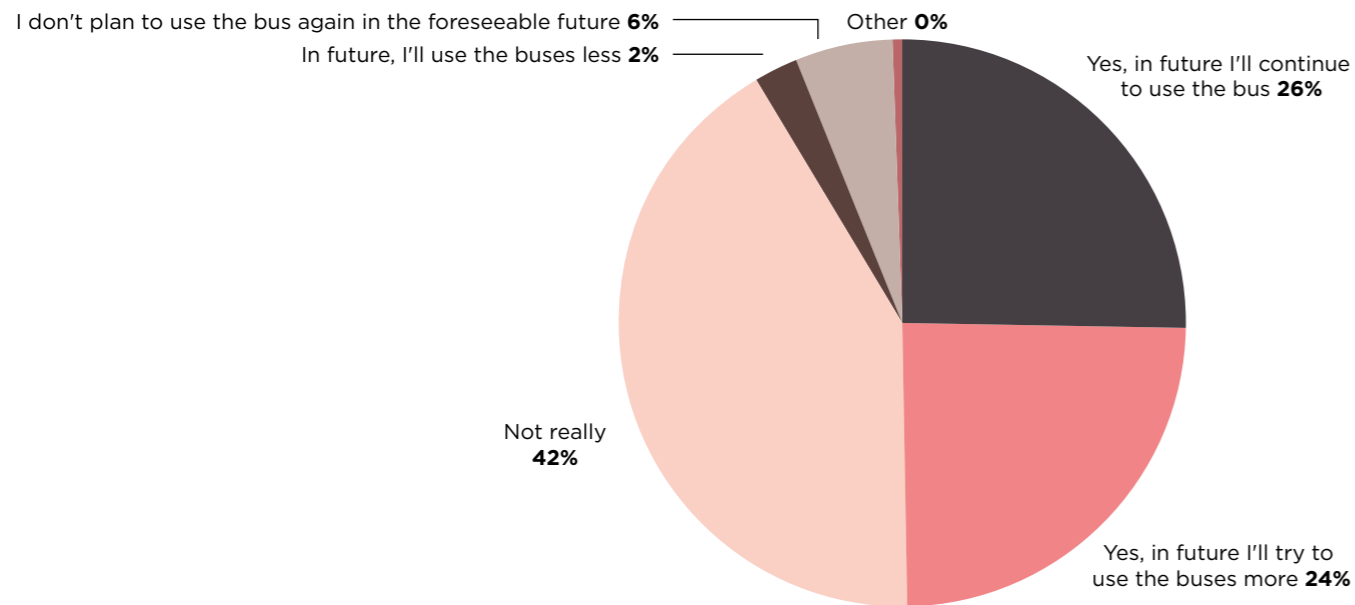
Connecting our bus services better with cycling infrastructure was another popular idea across the discussion groups, which overall would **"aid the green goal"** ([Paras Shah](#), competition prize winner). This could be done through:

- Improving the bike carriage facilities on buses, which could be attached to the front/back of the bus or a storage space inside.
- Making sure designated cycle lanes are considered with new bus stops and stations, and are carefully planned so that they work together.
- Providing bike storage at major bus stops and stations to encourage people to cycle the first and last mile of their journey.
- Planning bus routes with bike facilities which go further out into the countryside, allowing people who may live in the city centre to go out for the day their bikes without having to cycle there first.

Bus stops should also aim to become greener, both from the materials they are built from (recycled plastics or environmentally friendly materials), as well as their appearances and aesthetics. For example, several people suggested that this could involve placing potted plants and flowers around/nearby or even getting children from local primary schools to design/paint the colours for a bus shelter. This would go a long way in showing the bus service in a positive light, improve community connections and create a positive sense of place.

We also asked in our survey how the declaration of the Climate Emergency has impacted how people view the bus service(s) and their future travel intentions. We found that 50% said they would 'try to' or will 'continue to' use the buses more, whilst 42% said they were 'Not Really' impacted by the declaration, and another 8% said they would use it less/at all.

Has the declaration of the Climate Emergency impacted how you view the bus service(s) and your future travel intentions?



For those who answered negatively to the above question, the main two main reasons put forward for their answers were:

- in future, they'll use a 'more sustainable' form of transport over the buses such as walking, cycling or their own electric vehicle, which are usually more convenient for them. For example a non-bus user from Chapel Allerton said **"The buses are awful so I only take them when I have to. I'd rather save carbon by walking than taking the bus"**.
- regardless of the climate emergency, the buses still don't meet their needs. A non-bus user from Headingley for example stated **"I don't plan to use the buses because the service does not work for me, meaning I am forced to have a car and once I have paid car/tax and insurance, to get my money's worth, I will use the car for most / all journeys"**

Clearly, more needs to be done to make sure that the buses provide a reliable, frequent and affordable service for everyone. However, more could also be done to promote and advertise how eco-friendly using the bus is in reducing congestion and carbon emissions, encouraging people to use them over a private vehicle, or to encourage their use as part of their active travel journeys.



Comfortable

People suggested several things that would make a bus journey more comfortable for them, from having air conditioning in the hot summers, high speed Wi-Fi, freely available hand sanitizer, USB charging points and comfortable seats in both bus stops and buses. The interiors of buses should be clean, bright and have plenty of seating capacity to make a welcoming and warming atmosphere. Another suggestion was to provide a Metro newspaper for commuters on all buses to encourage people to read about the local news on their journey.

[Elliot Jarvis' competition entry](#) focussed on how to make a journey more comfortable for passengers in the **'Bus Hygiene Model'**, which includes "keeping up appearances" with clean interiors & exteriors and well maintained & presented vehicles. [Jane Ellis](#) even suggested in the competition making sure there are litter bins at each bus stop, after seeing her local bus stop was surrounded by litter.

Timm Hield submitted an idea to our competition to add some more flexible seats to bus stops **"I struggle with mobility and have long thought that there aren't enough seats at bus stops. I realise that expense is an issue and vandalism worsens this. However in places where there is no room for a covered bus stop I think a foldable seat attached to a lamppost or bus stop post could work. You'd fold it down and it would be sprung. When you got off it would retract to an upright position. I think the post would be strong enough as the main force would be downward from the person's weight."**

"The Harrogate Leeds Service (36) is much comfier than most buses in Leeds, and sets a great example of how buses can be improved" according to a bus user from Oakwood. Indeed the number 36 bus to Harrogate was even commended in the National Bus Strategy¹.

4 Where in Leeds needs to be improved?

Across Leeds and West Yorkshire, making the bus services more reliable, affordable and frequent (especially in the evenings and weekends) would go a long way in improving the service to become excellent for everyone.

But when we asked in which specific areas of Leeds the bus services needed to be improved, we found a wide variety of issues.

We need improved access to greenspace



When we asked in our survey if a person's local bus service(s) provided a convenient and/or attractive option for journeys from home to their preferred local greenspaces, 44% said no.

Temple Newsam Park particularly came up as being inaccessible by bus.

All parks and greenspaces in Leeds must be accessible, not only from the city centre but also from the suburbs e.g. Headingley to Roundhay Park.

We need more buses to leisure destinations



Particularly on weekends and bank holidays, people should be able to access places such as Lotherton Hall, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Harewood House easily via bus.

These buses should also be advertised clearly for those visiting Leeds.

Retail centres across Leeds should be accessible for everyone



Locations such as White Rose Shopping Centre, Cross Gates Shopping Centre, Seacroft Green, Crown Point and Leeds Retail Park should be accessible for all.

Orbital routes need to be planned so that suburban towns and villages are connected to their nearest retail centre too.

St James's Hospital and Leeds General Infirmary



All hospitals in Leeds need direct routes from each of the suburbs, without having to change several buses or get stuck in traffic in the city centre.

According to a bus user from Burley "I'm a nurse working in St James's hospital and struggle to get transport to start my shift on a Sunday"

Railway Stations

To create an integrated public transport system, buses need to be connected to and integrated with the train stations. This includes not only the main Leeds City Station but all suburban railway stations in the Leeds area.

Map Legend

Greenspaces

- 1 Temple Newsam Park
- 2 Roundhay Park
- 3 Middleton Park
- 4 Otley Chevin Forest Park
- 5 Meanwood Park
- 6 Eccup Reservoir
- 7 Woodhouse Moor
- 8 Golden Acre Park

Leisure Destinations

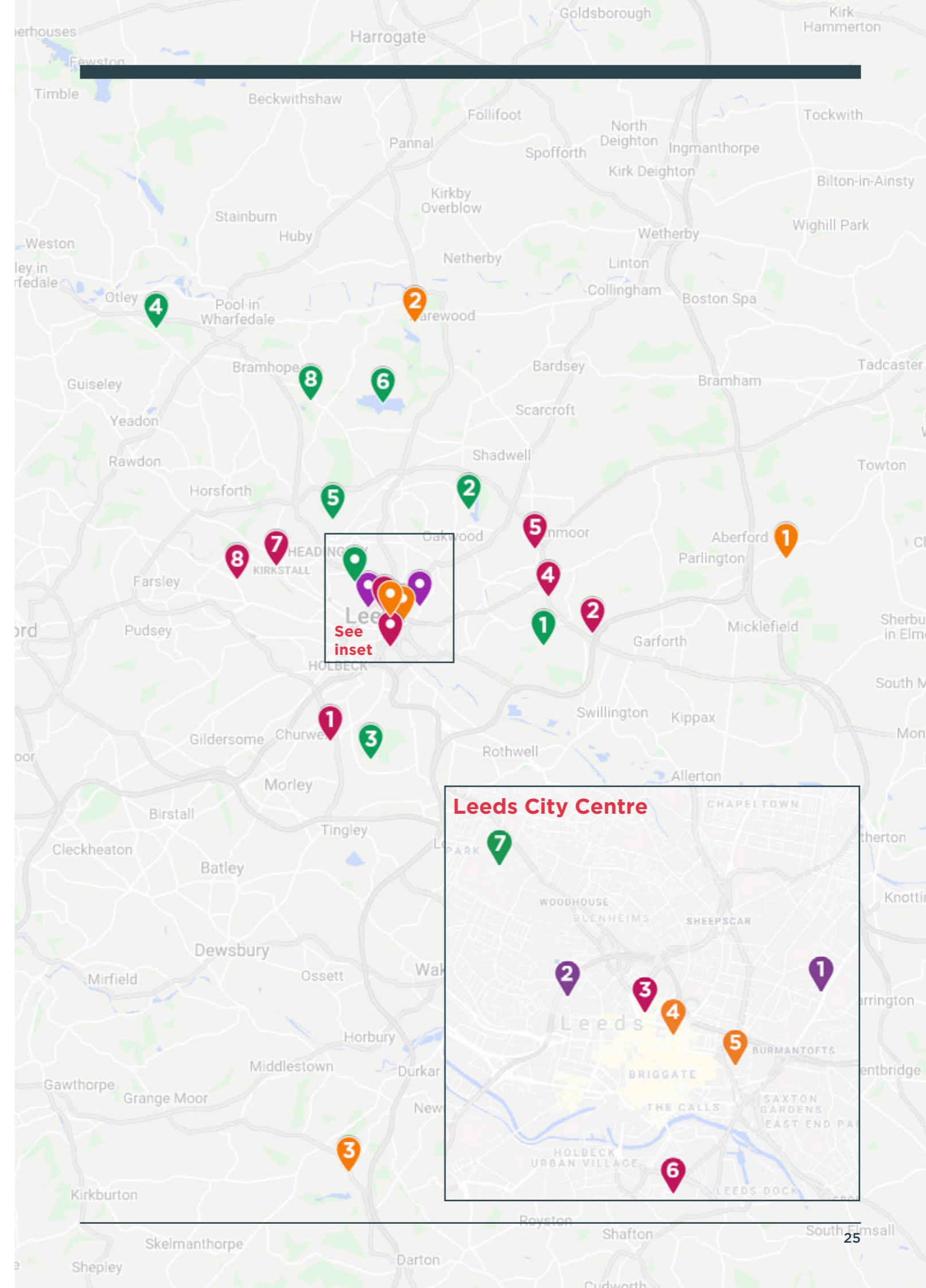
- 1 Lotherton Hall
- 2 Harewood House Trust
- 3 Yorkshire Sculpture Park
- 4 Leeds Grand Theatre
- 5 Leeds Playhouse

Hospitals

- 1 Saint James Hospital
- 2 Leeds General Infirmary

Retail Centres

- 1 White Rose Shopping Centre
- 2 Thorpe Park Hotel & Spa
- 3 The Merrion Centre
- 4 Crossgates Shopping Centre
- 5 Seacroft Green Shopping Centre
- 6 Crown Point Shopping Park
- 7 Kirkstall Bridge Shopping Park
- 8 Bramley Shopping Centre



5 Inspiration from the UK

When we asked “Can you think of any other cities which have an excellent bus service? How can Leeds learn from them?” here’s what people said...

📍 Birmingham

“It always bugs me when I see people put their feet on the seats in front of them. But I was on a bus recently and those backwards facing seats lifted up, and had a sticker saying ‘feel free to put your feet here, but if someone else wants to sit down please move them and bring the seat down’ - having more flexible space - what a great idea!” (bus user from Moortown).

📍 Reading

With plenty of bus lanes and highways, and according to a bus user from Hyde Park, they’re “clean, comfortable, modern buses. USB charging, Wifi. Very frequent services and lots of dedicated bus lanes in the centre”. The buses here even show the live train departure board when they are approaching a train station.

📍 Manchester

Where they have the ‘[System One Travelcard](#)’ which gives you unlimited, integrated travel to use on the bus, rail or tram to get around the city. The services were also commended by many for being frequent and having routes that extend from the city throughout Greater Manchester, even reaching the satellite towns in the surrounding areas. There are also three free city centre buses which run every 10-20 minutes connecting the key areas of the city centre.

📍 Nottingham

Commended by many people, Nottingham boasts a Robin Hood Card which provides integrated ticketing service where people can travel on any bus, tram or train. According to a bus user from Guiseley “it’s a coherent transport strategy including a workplace parking levy - where there’s lots of bus priority. A locally owned transport company that operates for people, not profit, has eco buses, frequency guarantee on major routes, night buses, and good connections to East Midlands Airport”.

📍 Oxford

“Where they have few cars and many buses, that run late into the evenings, where electric buses are given priority in Zero Emission Zones” (bus user from Adel).

📍 Edinburgh

“I was impressed by the high standard of vehicles and reasonable fares in Edinburgh” (bus user from Farsley).

📍 Glasgow, Newcastle, Sheffield

Each of these places were commended for having a metro/tram system that was integrated with the bus network. According to a bus user from Moortown “We shouldn’t see buses in isolation, but as part of a wider public transport strategy”.

📍 London

Clearly the most popular answer, mentioned by 41% of survey respondents as having a bus service we should replicate. People admired London’s bus service for several reasons:

- The buses are seamlessly integrated with other public transport “being able to use a single ticket just makes life a lot easier”, (bus user from Meanwood in our survey).
- They’re quick; from the speedy ‘tap in tap out’ contactless system, multi-door boarding/alighting to the prioritisation of buses on busy routes which speed up journey times.
- Because they’re so frequent and well-advertised, they’re reliable.
- They’re affordable: adults can enjoy unlimited journeys on all buses and trams for £1.55 made within an hour of ‘tapping’ in, with a daily cap of £4.65 - children can also travel for free with the Zip Oyster card and residents over 60 get to travel for free.
- They’re easy to understand - Transport for London branding is clear and consistent, the red double decker buses are iconic and recognisable and route maps and ‘next stop’ announcements are easy to understand.

📍 Brighton

Praised for its accessibility to users, particularly the [Helping Hands](#) assistance cards which are especially helpful to users with non-visible disabilities to discretely show if they need assistance.

Inspiration from around the world



Vancouver
 “Vancouver has an excellent, regular, reasonably priced, clean and safe public transport system which runs early in the mornings for workers and late at night too. The timetables are easy to understand and plan complex journeys and the buses and trains are always exactly on time.” (bus user from Wakefield).

Orlando
 “They clamp wheelchairs in and have seatbelts. They also have a dedicated place for wheelchairs to wait at bus stops. When a bus arrives the disabled person and/or their carers get to board first whilst other passengers wait and when the disabled person needs to get off, other passengers disembark before the driver unclamps the wheelchair user and assists them off the bus.” (bus user from Beechwood).

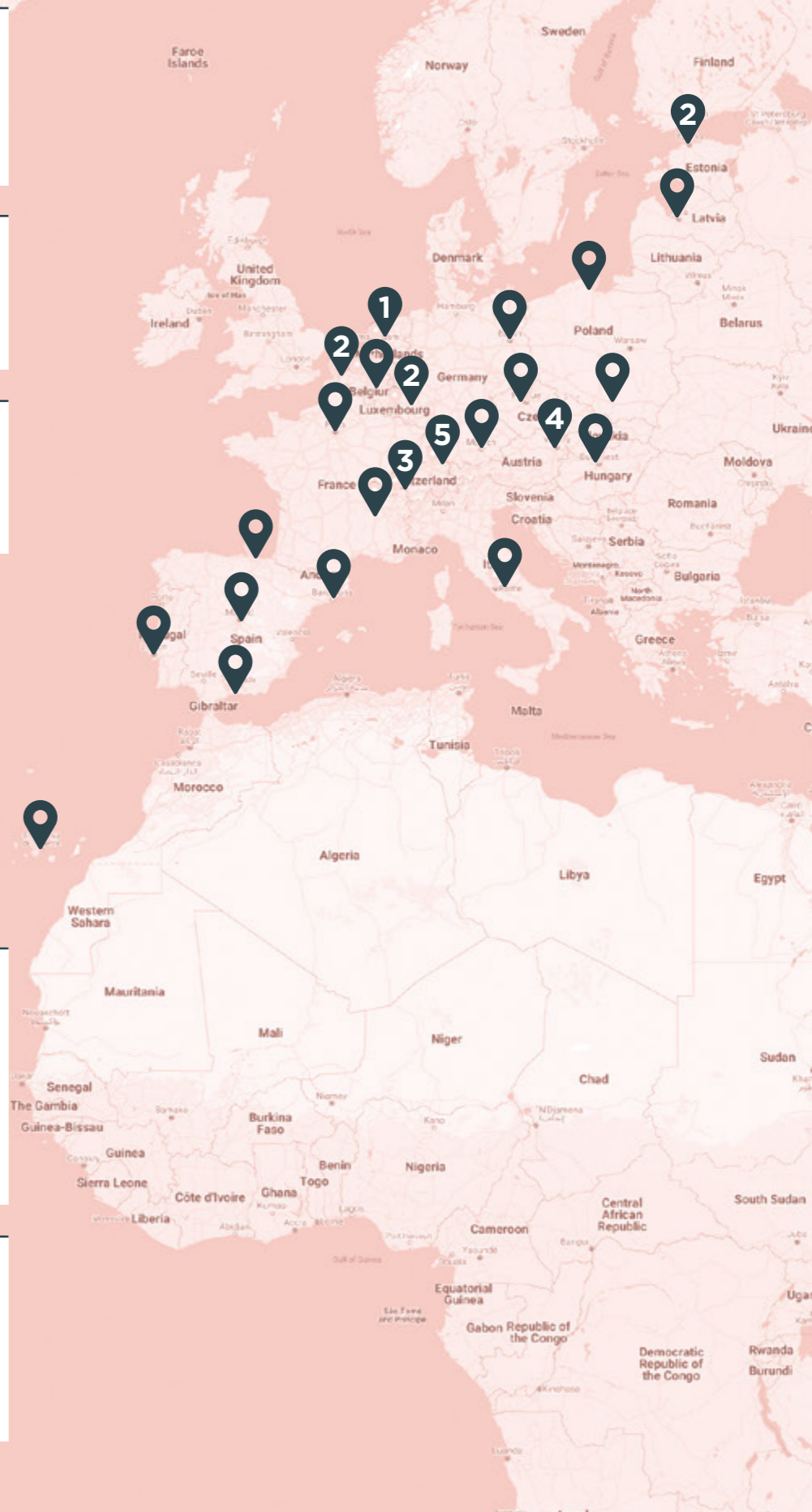
1 Amsterdam
 “The buses and trams are easy to use, always nearby and never too scarce!” (bus user from Kirkstall).

2 Luxembourg, Tallinn, Dunkirk
 Offer a free bus service for residents and visitors.

3 Geneva
 “Seems very comprehensive and integrated” (Bus user from Ilkley).

4 Vienna
 “I visit each year and it has an integrated system of bus, trams, rail and underground. You can buy weekly or yearly tickets which don’t cost the earth!” (bus user from Headingley).

5 Zurich
 “Throughout Switzerland the buses and trains are interconnected, even in the rural areas!” (bus user from Bradford).



6 Summary

At Leeds Civic Trust we want our city to be a sustainable, liveable and fair place to live in which transport helps people to lead rich, productive and healthy lives.

Hearing from people who live, work, study or visit Leeds, we believe this project has ignited a wider conversation about our bus services and how the general public believe they could be improved in the short-, medium- and long-term. Advocating for positive development in our city, we hope that some of the ideas and suggestions outlined in within this report are implemented over the coming years, and we'll strive to ensure that the civic voice in Leeds is always considered.

We at the Leeds Civic Trust believe that the declaration of the climate emergency places an imperative on improving public transport today, to reduce the number of private vehicles on our roads, which will in turn reduce emissions and improve air quality. As the [Connecting Leeds Transport Strategy](#)⁹ highlights, more people travelling by bus will have numerous benefits that will help achieve sustainable, healthy and inclusive growth.

The [Transport Strategy](#)⁹ lists the following benefits the bus services provide, with which the Trust concurs:

- Just one bus can take over 30 cars off the road, making them the most flexible, affordable and adaptable form of passenger transport.
- Buses have the lowest carbon footprint per passenger of any form of motorised transport and are leading the way in implementing new low emission technology.
- Buses are often the most affordable choice of travel and play an important role in social cohesion, providing access to education, work and healthcare, especially for those on low incomes or without access to a car.
- New technologies mean bus services can be more adaptive to changing demand, serving more people efficiently and serving greater areas.
- People catching the bus achieve half the Government recommended daily physical activity leading to health benefits. The experience of using public transport also provides many opportunities for social interactions that can help to tackle loneliness.
- Buses are also one of the safest forms of transport in the UK.

Making a great city, better, one of the aims from [Our Vision 2020-2025](#)¹ is to promote high quality sustainable development, and our bus services play a vital role in achieving that future. Leeds is the biggest city in Europe without a metro or a tram system¹⁰ and even if we did have a mass rapid transit system, buses would still be important. We cannot wait for these alternatives to become available before we take action. We believe that to achieve the scale of improvements required to increase bus patronage requires a different way of managing the services. Leeds Civic Trust advocates that the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Tracy Brabin should seize the opportunity provided by the [National Bus Strategy](#)¹⁴ and **move towards a publicly controlled, franchised bus system as quickly as possible**²⁰.

Leeds Civic Trust supports the aim of making Leeds 'a city where you don't need a car'⁹, but to achieve that goal, we need an excellent bus service for Leeds.



Appendix 1

Competition winning entry: The Leeds Express Omnibus (LEO) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for Leeds, submitted by Anzir Boodoo.

leo

leeds express omnibus
 excellent
 electric
 eco-friendly
 economical
 a **Bus Rapid Transit** system for Leeds

Why?

Buses are terrible

- Opaque networks are difficult for people to understand
- Poor connectivity between routes & between bus & train
- Poor vehicles
- Paying fares takes time

We can do so much better...

- Bus lanes everywhere possible
- Reallocate roadspace from cars on roads with 2 lanes
- Priority at junctions
- Junction rebuilds for bus & cycle priority
- Busway segregated from bikes where possible
- Buses draw in to stops for close & level boarding
- Board at any door, no fares taken on board (like a tram)



buses that work

- the double deck single entrance bus is horribly inefficient with loading
- electric for speed and emissions
- multi door boarding means less time at stops
- standard buses like the Mercedes-Benz eCitaro (above) are cheaper than custom
- level boarding at stops for maximum accessibility



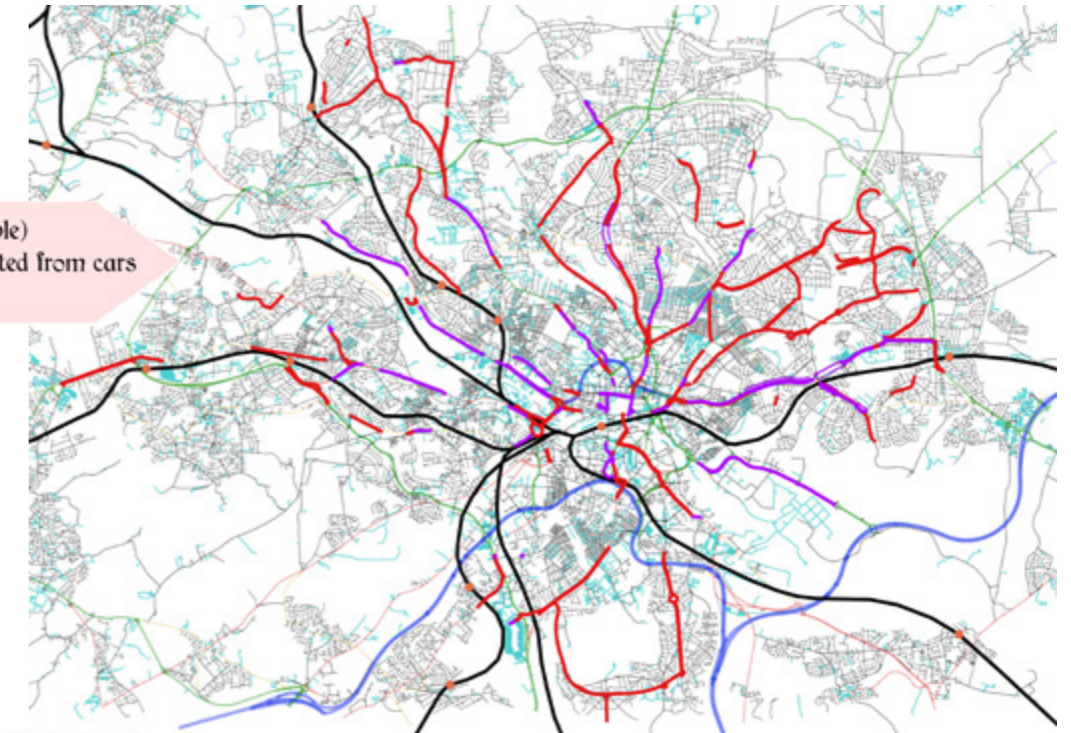
centre bus lanes (Albany) (credit: NICTD)

buses coloured by route (Reading)

tram like BRT stop (Rouen) (credit: smileytoerish)

infrastructures that work

- built on the existing network of bus lanes and guideways
- can be delivered quickly, in about 5 years
- new lanes are mainly white paint on existing roadway
- reallocating roadspace from cars enables more bus lanes
- segregated lanes from traffic and cycles for faster operation



the map shows existing bus lanes and guideways (purple) and potential guideways (red) using roadspace reallocated from cars making it easier to travel by bus and reducing car use

networks that work

- connectivity between bus and train with new stations where main bus routes meet rail lines
- better connectivity between bus routes with shared interchanges
- adapting routes so for example 1 goes to White Rose and 19 to Holt Park instead of stopping short
- integrated bus/train tickets - change from bus to train or travel one way by train & the other by bus

in Reading, buses show the live train departure board when approaching a station

stops that work

- fully level boarding with no gaps (see right) for maximum accessibility
- board at any door for speed
- stops organised at "stations" (like tram stations) with connecting "platforms" shown
- full connection information between bus and train

Phileas in the Netherlands is a Bus Rapid Transit system with level and close boarding

routes that work

- some routes on the core network are very bendy
- using the existing priority infrastructure, new routes can be built which maximise use of bus lanes
- bus lane infrastructure goes close to some places like Cross Green but doesn't serve them well
- areas with low car ownership need better service
- routes to better connect schools, shopping & leisure
- bus lanes in the middle of the road reduce conflict with turning movements, especially with right turns banned

why is leo fast and cheap?

level boarding by any door means less time at stops which means faster journeys which means fewer buses & drivers for the same service level which is cheaper to run
 everyone happy



leedsCity Bus	leo Bus
110 passengers	145 passengers
1 door	3 or 4 doors
18m max seat to door	7m max seat to door

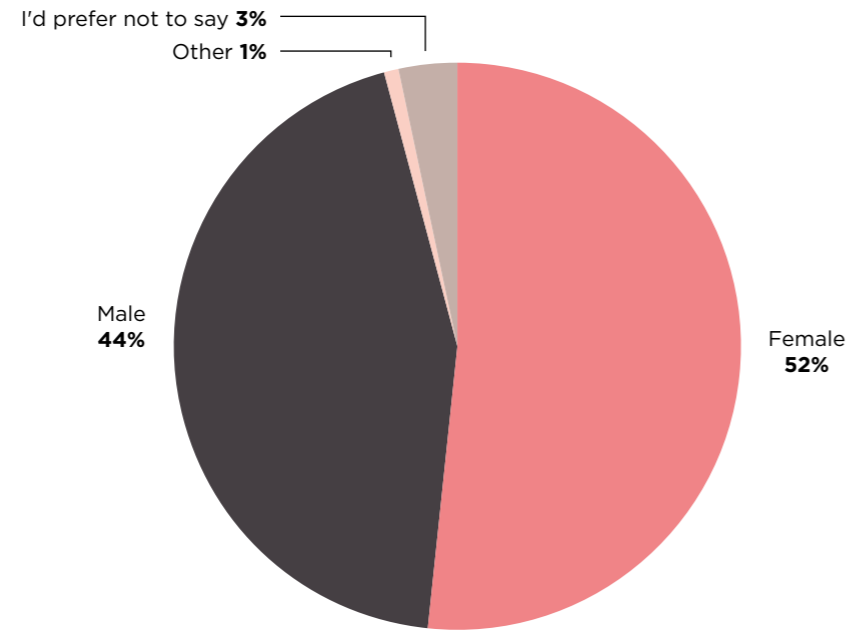
leo works for Leeds!

Anzir Boodoo
 Chair (West & North Yorkshire), CILT (UK)
 Car Free Cities Consultant, Possible
 Urbanist, Samuel L. Foxton

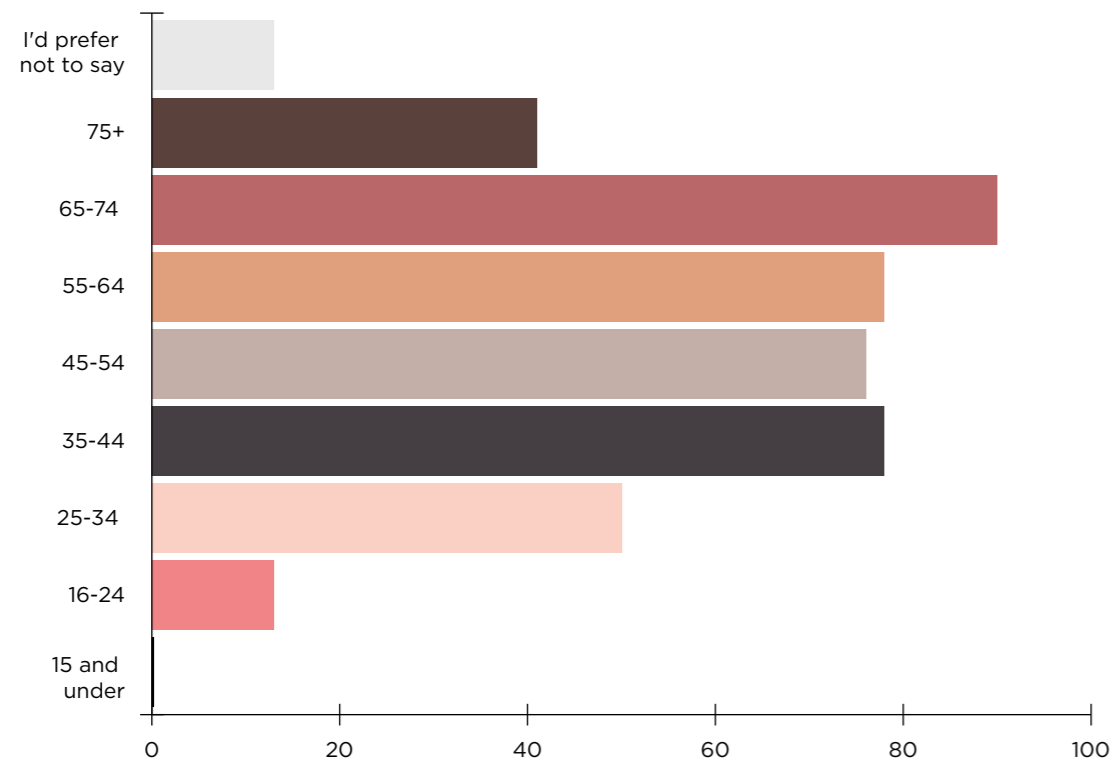
Appendix 2

Survey demographic questions and results.

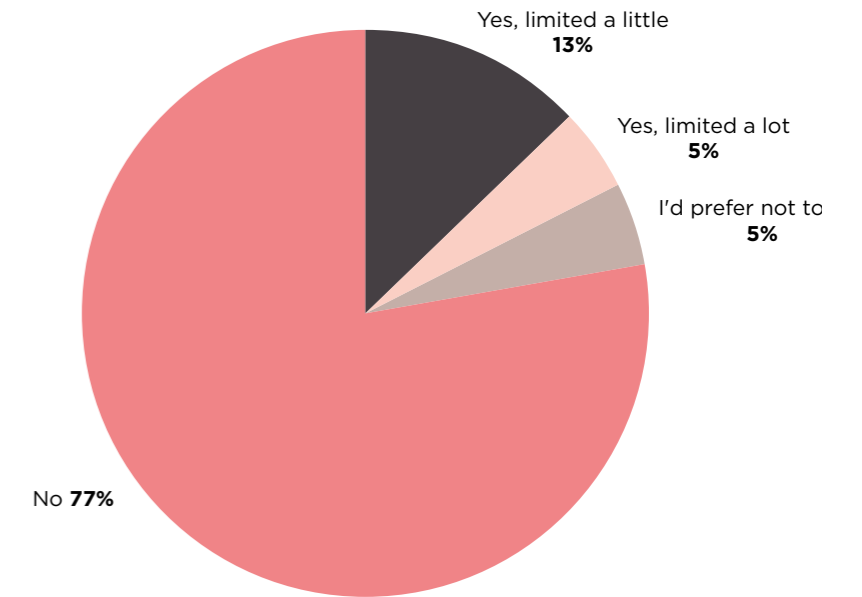
Question 24 - Do you identify as:



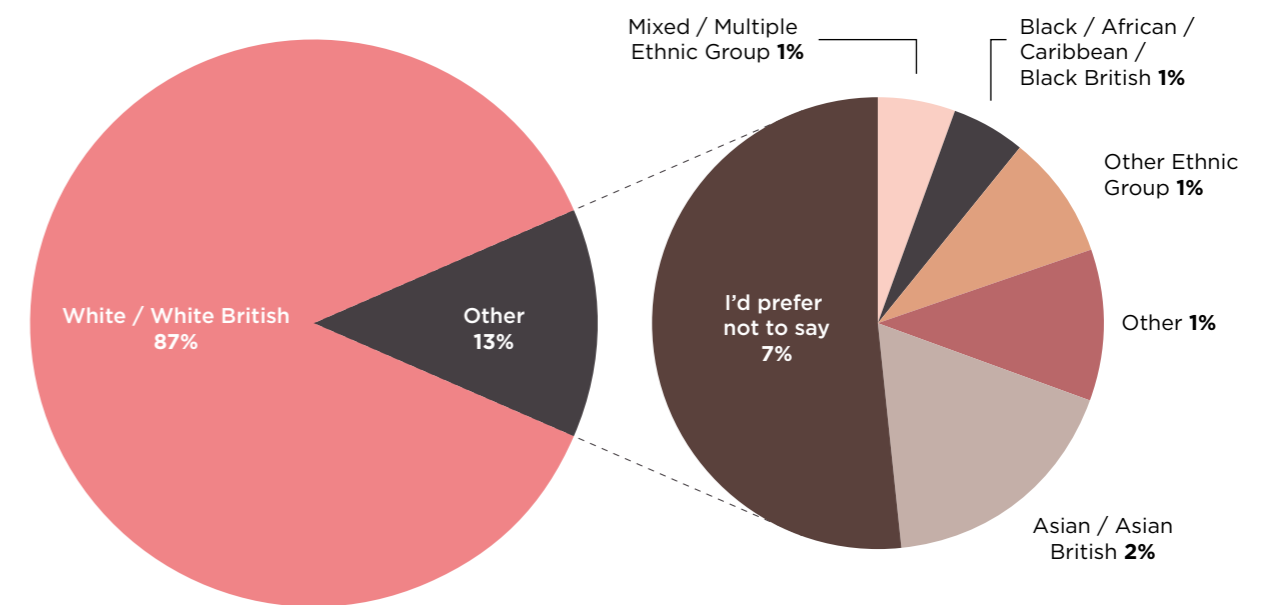
Question 25 - How old are you?



Question 26 - Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

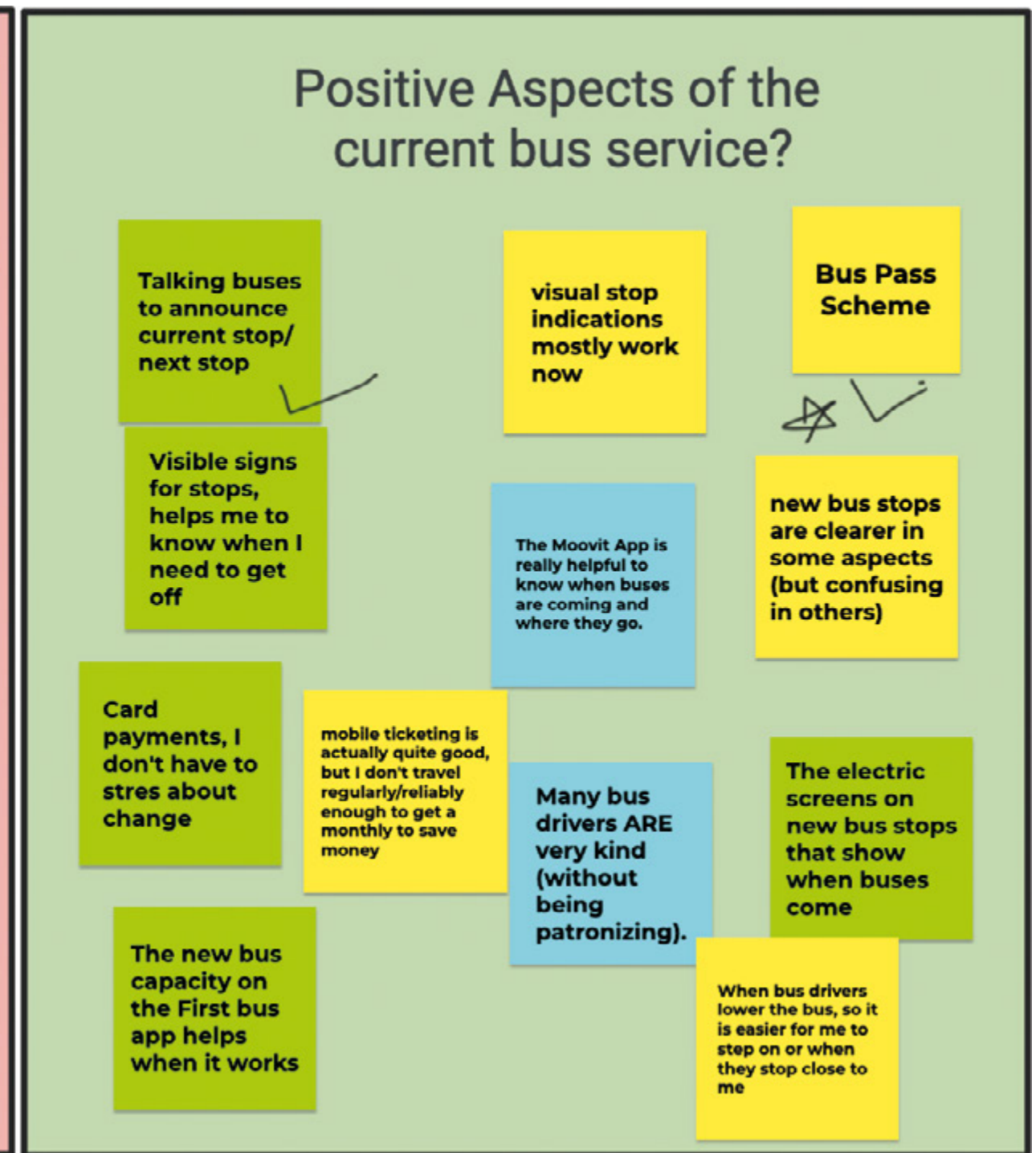


Question 27 - What is your ethnic group identity?



Appendix 3

Screenshot of a Jamboard created in a discussion group.



Appendix 4

Leeds Core Bus Network Map²¹.



Endnotes

- 1 Leeds Civic Trust. Our Vision 2020-2025. Available online at: [2020_2025-Trust-Vision-min.pdf \(leedscivictrust.org.uk\)](#)
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- 21 West Yorkshire Combined Authority. (2021) Leeds Core Bus Network. Metro. Available online from: [Leeds Core Bus Network | Metro \(wymetro.com\)](#)

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