



Department for
Infrastructure
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Accessible Transport Strategy

2025

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Summary of Responses
May 2016





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CONTACTING US

If this document is not in a format that meets your needs please contact us. We will be pleased to provide additional copies of this document in accessible formats e.g. in large print, easyread, Braille or audio CD. We will also consider any requests for the document to be produced in alternative languages.

The Accessible Transport Strategy: Public Consultation - Summary of Responses can be read in full on the Department's website via the following link.

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/accessible-transport-strategy-2025-public-consultation-summary-responses>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department for Regional Development (hereinafter referred to as "the Department")¹ conducted a public consultation exercise between 28 August and 20 November 2015 seeking the views of the public and stakeholders on a new Accessible Transport Strategy.

The consultation sought to agree the vision of having a more inclusive and accessible transport network and to agree the strategic themes of what needs to be taken forward to achieve that vision.

There were 202 responses received by the Department from a range of stakeholders. Based on these responses the Department has concluded that while the accessibility of the transport network in Northern Ireland has improved considerably over the last decade, significant challenges remain in achieving our vision of having:

a transport network in Northern Ireland that is inclusive and accessible to all.

The key findings of the consultation are summarised in this document. In addition to the key findings the Department acknowledges the comments received from respondents involved in delivering community transport services and some users of those services, both under the consultation headings and also about how the consultation process was conducted. Their views will be considered further through a series of targeted stakeholder engagements before the Strategy is finalised.

¹ As from the 9th May 2016 "the Department" will mean the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

KEY FINDINGS

Community Transport Services are important to the accessibility of the transport network and any change to the design and delivery of these services should involve those directly affected.

Due to funding cuts the withdrawal of some public transport services has had an adverse impact on the accessibility of services particularly in rural areas.

Further improvements need to be made in providing accessible information, physical infrastructure and staff training.

The implications of introducing 'step-free' transport needs to be examined in conjunction with service providers and users.

Engagement with older people and people with a disability is important to the development and delivery of services.

There is support for changing the application process for concessionary travel and the range of concessions available.

Consultees were also invited to propose actions for inclusion in plans to deliver the new Strategy. To develop an Delivery Plan to implement the new Strategy the Department will consider these proposals in consultation with key stakeholders, including transport providers, Government and the representatives of older people and people with a disability.

Subject to the approval of the Executive it is hoped the new Accessible Transport Strategy and associated Delivery Plan will be published later in 2016.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Department launched a 12 week public consultation on 28 August 2015 on a draft Accessible Transport Strategy.

In going out to public consultation the Department sought the views of all the major stakeholders and the general public, especially those who are older or have a disability. We believe that those who provide transport services and those who have difficulty using these transport services or don't use them at all, due to lack of accessibility are best placed to shape the delivery of an inclusive and accessible transport network.

To inform the consultation process the Department carried out an extensive pre-consultation exercise. It included a specially commissioned survey of older people and people with a disability followed by a series of meetings with older people and people with a disability and direct engagement with the Inclusive Mobility Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) who advise Government on mobility issues.

The Department has completed an Equality of Opportunity Screening Template, in order to identify the importance of the proposed policy on Section 75 groups.

It concluded that there may be minor positive differential impact on age, persons with a disability and dependant groups and these groups will benefit from improvements in the physical environment making it easy for those with mobility difficulties to get access to goods and services. In general, improvements to the transport network are likely to benefit everyone who makes journeys by public transport, private car or as a pedestrian.

The Department has also completed a Rural Issues Statement examining how the policy will impact on rural areas. This process has determined that improvements in the accessibility of transport infrastructure or transport services could benefit those who use them in rural areas, reducing social exclusion and improving access to goods and services.

Both these documents will be updated to take account of the comments received from the public consultation as the Strategy is finalised.

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION

The consultation document was distributed to a range of stakeholders and individuals on the Department's list of consultees; IMTAC contact lists and organisations representing older people and people with a disability who provided links to the consultation document to their clientele.

The Department provided the consultation document in a number of alternative formats including Easyread and large print. Responses were accepted in a variety of formats including online and in Easyread format.

The Department received 202 formal responses to the public consultation. A list of those who responded can be found at Appendix A.

The consultation document is available using the following link:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/drd/accessible-transport-strategy-consultation-2025.pdf>

A copy of the Summary of Responses to the Accessible Transport Strategy 2025: Public Consultation will be distributed to all who responded to the public consultation.

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Who responded?

There were 202 responses received by the Department from a range of stakeholders. These included:



In addition to the written responses received a number of meetings were held with various groups representing older people and people with a disability to listen to their views first hand.

A number of organisations who responded to the consultation have also indicated that their responses reflect their own engagement with older people and people with a disability on how transport accessibility or lack of accessibility affects them.

What did they say?

The Department welcomes all comments provided and the valuable advice and recommendations on actions that need to be included in the Strategy.

It is clear from the both written responses and the Departments direct stakeholder engagement throughout the consultation process that the accessibility of the transport network in Northern Ireland has improved considerably over the last decade. However, it is also clear that to deliver a transport network that is inclusive and accessible to all there is much work to be done to overcome the obstacles and barriers to transport that remain in place for older people and people with a disability.

Breakdown of responses

The comments received in response to the Consultation have been summarised under the same headings and strategic themes used in the Consultation document.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Under this heading the Department asked:

'Has the accessibility of the transport system for older people and people with a disability improved since the launch of the Accessible Transport Strategy in 2005?'

47% of the 159 people who responded to this question said 'yes' there had been improvements and highlighted the following positive changes:

- Free travel for those aged 60+.
- Improved accessibility and availability of information, including live information at bus stops.
- New accessible trains and low floor buses.
- Better reliability as a result of new and improved bus lanes which speed up travel by public transport.
- Improved disability awareness training for public transport staff.
- Audio visual information systems on buses and trains.

Whilst the 'yes' responders considered overall there have been improvements to the accessibility of the transport network since 2005 a number of areas for further improvement were highlighted in their responses. These included recommendations that transport infrastructure (such as buses, stations, rail halts etc.) should be reviewed within the lifetime of a new Accessible Transport Strategy and that the Strategy should include a targeted programme of investment and support. It was also flagged up in the written responses and during the direct engagements with stakeholders that more needs to be done to put passengers, older people and their representatives, people with a disability and their representatives and service providers at the core of service development.

53% of those who responded said 'no' and of these 70% that said the system had not improved did not give any indication of why it had not. The other 30% of 'no' responders commented on a range of issues, as set out below:

- Community Transport Services, specifically that:
 - funding cuts had adversely impacted on community transport;

-
- there was no commitment within the consultation document to community transport type services; and
 - the lack of a "joined up" approach between rural community transport providers.
- The availability and frequency of rural bus services.
 - The design and delivery of services has not kept pace with the changes in travel patterns.
 - Free travel is not available to **all** disabled people.
 - The need to carry out a full Equality Screening on the final Strategy and consult again publicly.
 - The lack of disability awareness among public transport provider staff.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY – NEED

Under this heading the Department also asked:

'Is there a need for a new Strategy and why a new Strategy should or shouldn't be developed?'

Of the 164 people who responded to this question 59% felt there was a need for a new Accessible Transport Strategy and offered the following comments in support of developing a new Strategy.

- There is a need to build on the achievements to date by developing a Strategy with clear direction, a new Action Plan that has specific targets and an outcome focussed programme of investment that will help address the remaining barriers and gaps in the accessible transport network allowing everyone to travel independently and safely.
- The increasing ageing population will subsequently increase the demand and the need for more accessible transport and a new Strategy will need to reflect this.
- There is a need to acknowledge and set out in Government policy the role of community transport services and the importance to those who are rely on them in rural areas.
- There is a need to recognise and consider the interrelationship of all services and travel issues that contribute to improving the accessibility of the transport network, including wider traffic management issues such as parking infrastructure, disability bays and drop-off points at all public facilities.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY – VISION

Under this heading the Department asked:

'Do you agree with the 'Vision' for a new Accessible Transport Strategy?

"To have a transport network in Northern Ireland that is inclusive and accessible to all"

157 responses to this question were received. 57% indicated agreement with the vision with the remaining 43% not agreeing.

A number of comments were made in response to this question from both the yes and no respondents. These include:

- suggestions for alternative wording and priorities that the vision\Strategy should deliver;
- the importance of community transport services and associated funding in contributing to an accessible transport network;
- the consideration of a separate rural transport strategy;
- concerns about how the vision could be delivered without partnership and co-operation between Government, transport providers and users of transport services;
- the Strategy should try to achieve modal shift away from reliance on cars; and
- DRD's vision was only for the main transport operators.

BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSES ON THE STRATEGIC THEMES

A number of the comments and issues raised under each of the five strategic themes are cross-cutting in that they feature more than once under different themes. This compiled summary aims to capture all comments and issues raised but in the interests of brevity each issue is set out only once under the related dominant theme.

Theme 1: Enhancing the accessibility of the public transport network

This theme looked at improving the accessibility of the public transport network. At a strategic level the aim of this proposed theme in a new Strategy was to deliver improved accessibility on the public transport network by maintaining and improving the public transport fleet and researching how to improve the coverage of the public transport network.

Analysis of the responses received shows that 50% of the respondents agree with this strategic approach with the majority of the 83 comments on this theme relating to the 'Accessibility' and 'Availability' of public transport.

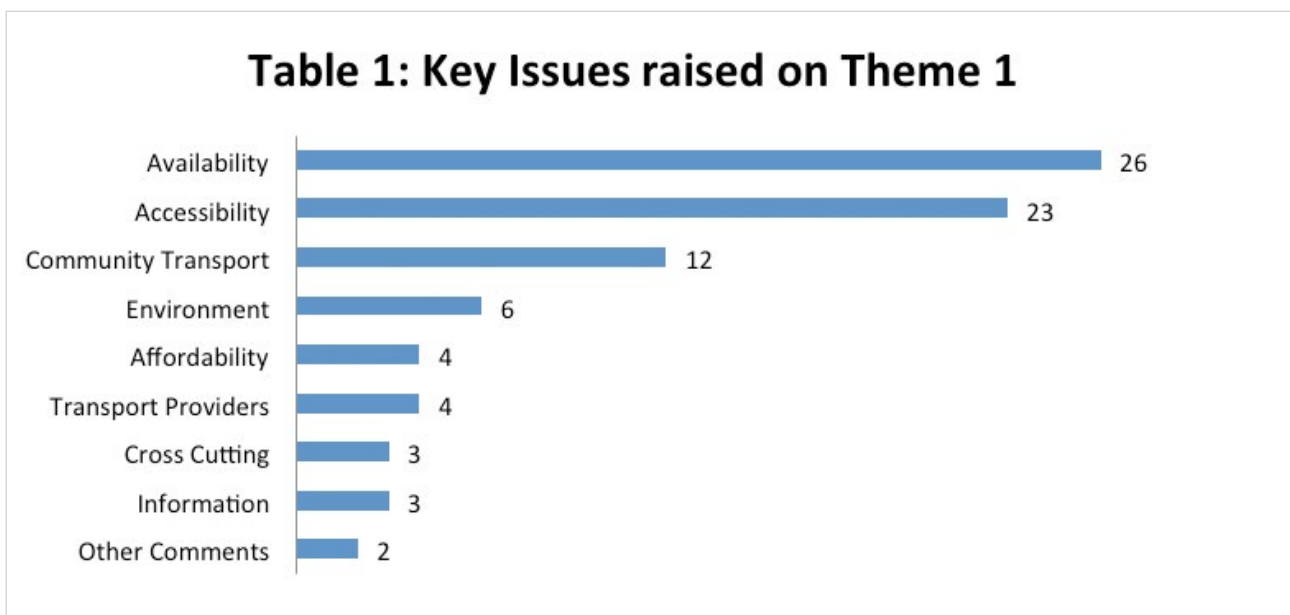


Table 1 above shows the breakdown of the issues raised on Theme 1 with a summary of the key comments set out overleaf.

Theme 1: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the public transport network'	Number of comments
Availability	26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a currently a lack of services, inconsistent time-tabling and poor frequency of services, especially in rural areas. • There is currently insufficient budget and resources to offer improved services. • There is a reliance on Community Transport in rural areas, so it is important to keep links between the mainstream public transport services and the community transport services. • More options for more routes are needed. 	
Accessibility	23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of the public transport network is essential. This includes the accessibility of bus and rail stations and halts. • Some stations require improvements to the quality of audio announcements, lighting and the location and accessibility of station facilities such as car parking, rest rooms and shops. • Improved safety at stations is needed particularly visibility at night. • Staffed stations at all times are needed for those who have difficulty travelling alone. • Accessibility should include step free vehicles and more provision on board vehicles for wheel chair users. • Raising and lowering steps on buses is essential for older and physically impaired people. • The Department should engage widely to agree standards of vehicle accessibility. • Audio visual assists everyone and should be rolled out on all bus and rail services. • 24 hour advance booking for wheelchair users should not be a requirement to access transport services. • Provision and accessibility of information is essential. 	

Theme 1: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the public transport network'	Number of comments
Community Transport	12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and community transport is often the only option for older people and people with a disability to access services and participate in society. Current provision of these services is inadequate and Government needs to address funding issues and improve these essential services. • Better integration of public transport with community transport and rural transport networks needs to be developed. • The Integrated Transport Project needs to be analysed thoroughly and only taken forward based on demonstrable results. 	
Environment	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accessibility of the pedestrian environment needs improved particularly on links to city and town centres from bus and rail stations. • Better enforcement and awareness of inconsiderate pavement parking is needed. • Infrastructure including pedestrian infrastructure must be improved in relation to the safe location of bus stops. 	
Affordability	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration should be given to extending free travel for all disabled people including carers and cross border travel. • Existing ticketing issues such as the restriction on some SmartPass users in purchasing discounted tickets needs to be addressed. 	
Transport Providers	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer and accessibility training for drivers should be provided by people with disabilities. 	

Theme 1: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the public transport network'	Number of comments
Cross Cutting – Other Government Departments	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more joined up approach across government is needed to improve access to services such as health and education. • Hospital parking for blue badge holders described as "very inadequate to ensure prompt appointments without frustration". 	
Information	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Audio Visual" on all buses and trains and in all stations is essential. The use of other technology such as Smartphone applications should also be considered to make transport more accessible for all. • Publicity and awareness campaigns are needed on a range of accessibility issues. 	
Other Comments	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality on transport services should be provided to everyone and it is important that Welfare Reform does not impact on transport services. • The Blue Badge scheme needs to be monitored to ensure no abuse. 	

Theme 2: Improving the accessibility of the wider transport network

This theme looked at improving the accessibility of the wider transport network beyond public transport. At a strategic level the aim of this proposed theme in a new Strategy would be to deliver improved pedestrian environments and better integration of transport services.

Analysis of the responses received shows that 51% of the respondents agree with this strategic approach. However, of the 49% of responses that did not support this strategic approach, a significant 41% were received from the transport providers or users of community transport services in rural areas. These responses indicated that the language of the document generally was confusing, but especially under this theme.

Of the 144 comments received on this theme the majority relate to community transport. These are summarised below and as already indicated the Department plan to meet with these stakeholders to gain more insight into this complex issue.

The next most common issues raised under this theme were the 'Integrated Passenger Transport Project' and the 'Pedestrian Environment'.

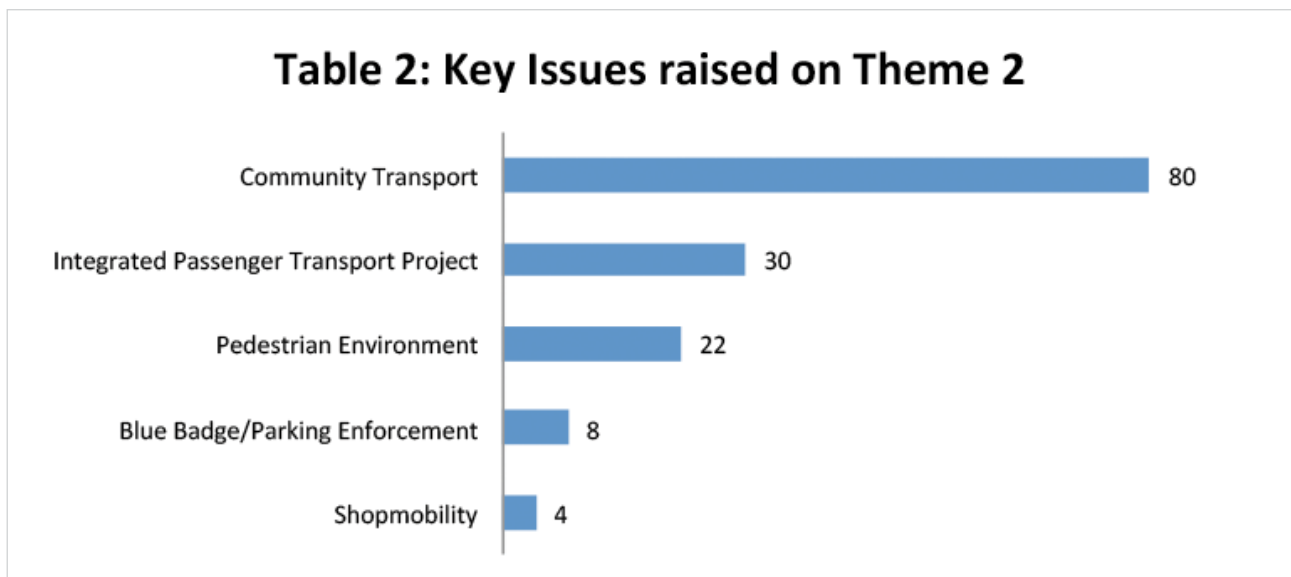


Table 2 above shows the breakdown of the issues raised on Theme 2 with a summary of the key comments set out overleaf.

Theme 2: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the wider transport network'	Number of comments
Community Transport	80
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language of the document generally is confusing especially under this theme. • There is no commitment anywhere in the document to naming, maintaining and enhancing community transport services including door-to-door type services. • The Strategy should have a clear commitment to fully resourcing a community transport system. • The document is only concerned with public transport in urban centres. • There is lack of clarity in relation to the future of the community transport sector especially in some very deprived areas. • Not all older people or people with a disability are in a position to avail of trains and buses, particularly in rural areas where they rely on rural transport or taxis. 	

Theme 2: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the wider transport network'	Number of comments
Integrated Passenger Transport Project	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural transport services are not entirely satisfactory and there are problems with availability, affordability and accessibility. • The Department needs to examine options to deliver better integrated transport particularly in addressing integration with mainstream public transport for rural communities and better multi modal connections and hubs. • To ensure older people who cannot drive or use public transport do not experience further isolation, exclusion or disadvantage the Strategy must embrace a fully accessible approach to transport by improving community transport services such as Door-to-Door and Rural Transport. • To deliver a truly integrated accessible transport network that offers seamless end to end journeys for users, there needs to be joined up working across government and public bodies in the planning, budgeting and delivery of services. • Transport providers and some users of community transport services in rural areas indicated that they had no knowledge of the Integrated Passenger Transport Project which makes it difficult to gauge the impact of the Project. 	
Pedestrian Environment	22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the pedestrian environment should not require people to walk further in order to access public transport. • Improvements to the pedestrian environment must include proper accessible footpaths to bus stops in rural areas. • In rural areas, footpaths and street lighting would need to be improved and extended to facilitate and encourage walking and travel by wheelchair users. • Areas around bus stops must be kept clear of obstacles i.e. no street furniture. 	

Theme 2: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the accessibility of the wider transport network'	Number of comments
Blue Badge/Parking Enforcement	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to maintain and strengthen the Blue Badge scheme and deal with the misuse of the scheme. • Enforcement of parking regulations which blocks pavements is essential. • There is a need to monitor off street parking to ensure no abuse of disabled bays and the maintenance of existing levels of disabled bay provision is required. 	
Shopmobility	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopmobility services are the final link in the transport chain and should be included in the Accessible Transport Strategy. 	

Theme 3: Enhancing the customer experience

This theme looked at improving the passenger experience. At a strategic level the aims of this proposed theme in a new Strategy would be to improve the passenger experience by delivering better customer training to transport providers and their staff, assist independent travel by encouraging mentoring or travel training schemes and to improve the accessibility and seamlessness of journeys by working with the voluntary sector to explore the potential of new technology.

Analysis of the responses received shows that 47% of the respondents agree with this approach, and of the 68 comments received on this theme the majority were in relation to the need for Disability Awareness Training.

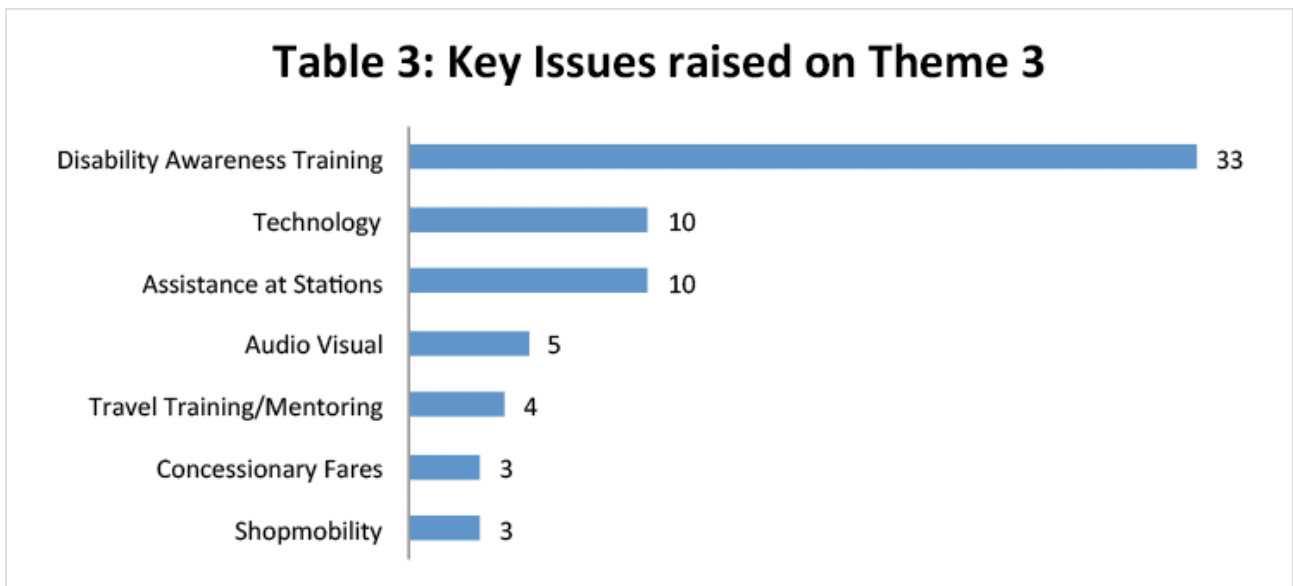


Table 3 above shows the breakdown of the issues raised on Theme 3 with a summary of the key comments set out overleaf.

Theme 3: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the customer experience'	Number
Disability Awareness Training	33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All bus operators should be encouraged to sign up to the RNIB "We're on Board" Bus Charter to help remove barriers to independent travel. • There needs to be continual driver and staff training in disability awareness and disability equality. This training needs to be delivered proactively and explicitly promote positive attitudes to people with a disability. • Minimum training standards for drivers and transport staff need to be defined and consistent across organisations with appropriate monitoring and feedback from users. • Driver should not pull away from a stop until passengers are seated. • Driver assistance on board should include information and assistance with priority seating. • More space is needed for Guide Dogs on vehicles. • Drivers should tell blind and partially sighted passengers which service they are on and what the destination is. • Assault screens on buses can cause difficulties for some passengers hearing or speaking to the driver and those with sight difficulties can find it difficult to locate the pass scanners. 	
Assistance at Stations	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and visible assistance should be available at stations for passengers especially those who are older or with a disability. • Timetable and bus stop information at stations needs to be in a format suitable for blind and partially sighted people. • Audio announcements at stations need to be frequent and clear. 	

Theme 3: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the customer experience'	Number
Technology	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New technology should be explored, but consideration must be given to those customers who may be reluctant to use it such as older people. • Explore better ways to accommodate powered wheelchairs and scooters on public transport. • Proposals for new technology should be trialled in consultation with the public. 	
Audio Visual	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio visual information systems on all vehicles and stations must be a vital element in the new strategy. • Audio visual on trains is sometimes not maintained at night when it would be most useful. • On services where audio/visual is not available drivers should advise passengers with sight or hearing difficulties when their stop is reached and assist them getting off the bus. 	
Mentoring/Travel training	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for travel mentoring/training schemes along with the delivery of high quality disability awareness training for staff. • Travel needs assessments and travel training interventions at appropriate stage. 	
Concessionary Fares	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessionary fares should continue and be extended to include taxis for those on a limited budget who are not able to travel using public transport. • The application process for concessionary fares should be reviewed. 	

Theme 3: Summary of comments and issues raised on 'Enhancing the customer experience'	Number
Shopmobility	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shopmobility services can facilitate transition between transport modes.	

Theme 4: Enhancing the accessibility of information

This theme is targeted at improving the accessibility of information. At a strategic level its aim in a new Strategy would be to deliver more accessible information by looking at ways to improve the detail of travel information, how it is presented and its availability within different formats or media.

Analysis of the responses received shows that 48% of the respondents agree with this approach. Of the 79 comments received under this theme the majority were in relation to the Accessibility of Information.

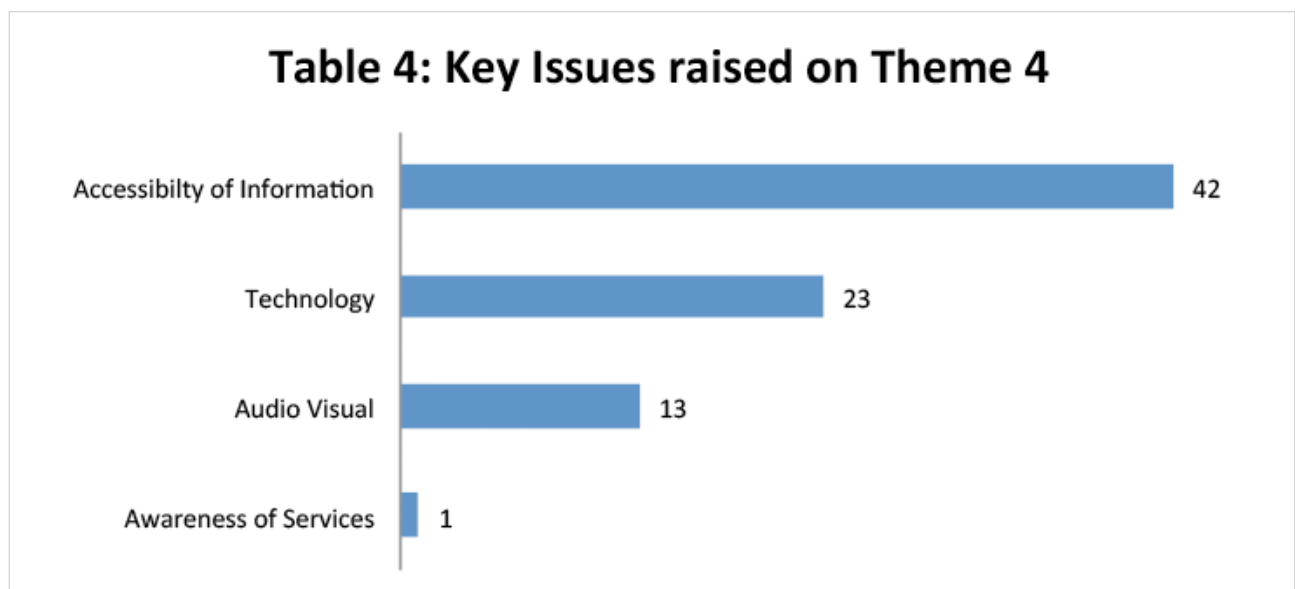


Table 4 above shows the breakdown of the issues raised on this theme with a summary of the key comments set out overleaf.

Theme 4: Summary of comments received on 'Enhancing the accessibility of information'	Number of comments
Accessibility of Information	42
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy should commit to exploring new ways to provide more accurate, timely, accessible information that is easy to understand and is provided in different formats that meet the specific needs of all older people and people with a disability. 	
Technology	23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile phone apps with real time information and bus shelter real time information boards are essential going forward. Paper timetables and telephone support should also be retained, as many older people and disabled people do not interact online or have access to some forms of modern technology/online services such as smart apps. The Translink Journey Planner needs to be simplified. 	
Audio Visual	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audio Visual equipment in buses and trains welcome, but needs to be rolled out across all public transport services. Delivering these aims will require appropriate resourcing, planning, and maintenance to keep the new technology continuously operational. 	
Awareness of Services	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live information on services should be accessible on social media such as Twitter to inform people of route changes and service problems. Publicity campaign to highlight where improvements have been made on transport, as often people still think public transport is still inaccessible for them or aren't aware of improvements. 	

Theme 5: Working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders

This theme is targeted at improving working with partners and stakeholders to deliver transport services aimed at the needs of the user. At a strategic level its aim in a new Strategy would be to deliver more accessible transport services to all users by examining new ways to maximise meaningful engagement and participation.

Analysis of the responses received shows that 48% of the respondents agree with this approach. Of the 70 comments received under this theme the majority related to engaging with stakeholders.

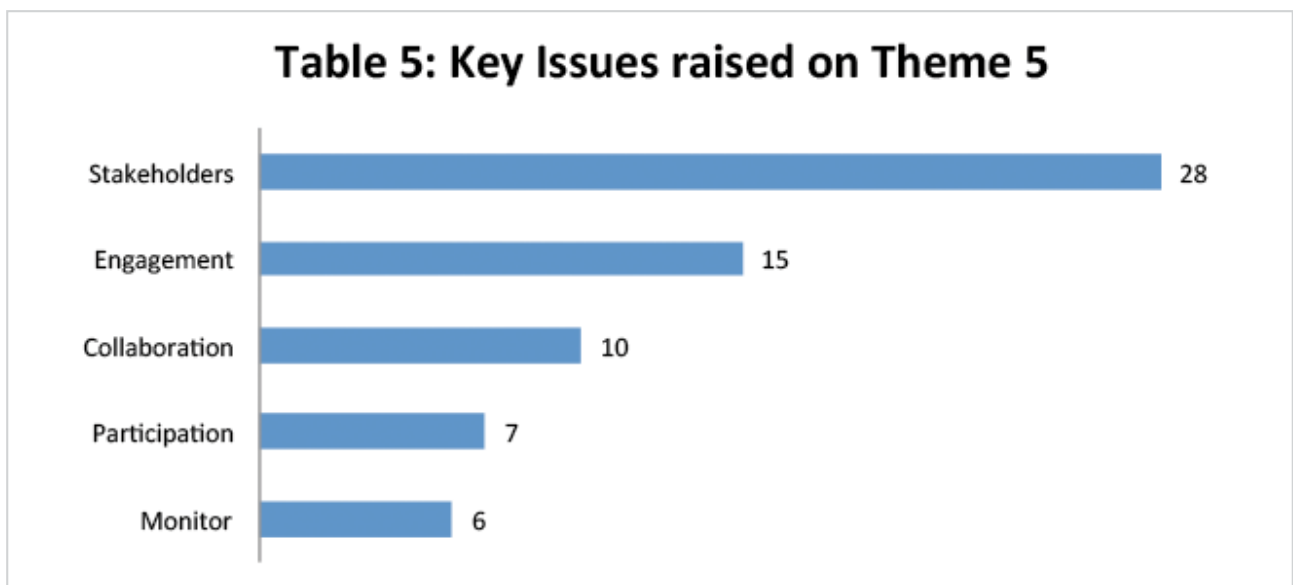


Table 5 above shows the breakdown of the issues raised on this theme with a summary of the key comments set out overleaf.

Theme 5: Summary of comments raised in responses on 'Working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders'	Number of Comments
Stakeholders	28
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners and stakeholders need to be clearly identified and set out in the Strategy. • The Department needs to recognise and consider the roles that key stakeholders can play in developing and implementing the new Strategy. 	
Engagement	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful engagement with stakeholders will be crucial to the success of the Strategy. • Local engagement particularly in rural areas in order to address the needs of the elderly and disabled people in accessing transport networks in rural areas is important. 	
Collaboration	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better collaboration is needed between all transport service providers, transport bodies and organisations who represent older people and people with a disability, to ensure consistency in providing accessible transport services across Northern Ireland. • Collaboration with community transport partnerships is necessary. 	
Participation	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department needs to have effective processes and systems in place to ensure that older people and people with a disability are at the heart of decision making. 	

Theme 5: Summary of comments raised in responses on 'Working in collaboration with partners and stakeholders'	Number of Comments
Monitor	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful engagement with key user groups on an on-going basis along with monitoring and feedback are essential to understanding and overcoming all the barriers to a fully accessible transport network. 	

DELIVERY PLANS

Suggested Actions to improve accessibility

The public consultation invited recommendations on specific actions to be included in a Delivery Plan to deliver the new Accessible Transport Strategy. 78% of respondents provided actions they would like to see included.

Including any actions that flow from the comments made under the High Level Issues and Strategic Themes the Department has summarised all actions proposed for inclusion in a new Action Plan under 5 key areas:

- Transport and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Customer Experience
- Information
- Partnership engagement
- Funding

It is important to note that this is a reflection of the actions proposed by respondents to the consultation and will be carefully considered by the Department and key stakeholders before inclusion in the final Plan. If an action listed here does not feature in the final Delivery Plan this does not mean that the issue will not be addressed. For example, some actions are in the process of being dealt with while other minor issues can be dealt with through discussion and agreement with the relevant bodies and organisations concerned.

It should also be noted that some actions put forward may not be included or delivered within the Strategy due to reasons such as budget constraints, or because agreement cannot be reached with a transport provider to deliver the action.

Transport and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Make step-free access a requirement of any future investment in transport services where public money is spent.
- Introduce level access to all public transport infrastructure and facilities including stations, trains and Belfast Rapid Transit.

- Ensure bus and railway station infrastructure and all public transport vehicles, including community transport vehicles, are accessible for everyone including blind and partially sighted people, people who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters and people with poor physical mobility.
- Increase the space on buses and trains for wheelchair users and improve information about available spaces.
- Introduce specific accessibility requirement criteria in Government procurement policy to prioritise meeting the needs of older people and people with a disability by requiring best practice provision of accessibility in future infrastructure projects.
- Improve availability of public transport services for rural dwellers especially for older people or people with a disability who are socially isolated and excluded from accessing affordable public transport.
- Improve the pedestrian environment and deliver accessible footpaths to bus stops in rural areas.
- Develop, implement and fund, in partnership with other transport bodies, a new and improved system of community transport services including services for isolated and rural communities not served by any regular public transport service.
- Plan, design and invest in better integrated transport particularly in rural areas and ensure that there are seamless accessible links between all services and modes of travel that meet the needs of older people and people with a disability.
- Flexible bus stop policy in safe places to accommodate elderly/disabled passengers. Increase the number of dropped kerbs and sensibly plan their location in relation to bus stops and pedestrian routes to allow access for older people and people with a disability.
- Address the issue of lower kerb heights particularly in Public Realm Schemes which are causing difficulties for blind, partially sighted people and their Guide Dogs.
- Investigate best practice and address the issue of tactile paving causing problems for people who suffer Parkinson's disease.
- Provide adequate parking provision for older people and people with a disability in all public transport parking facilities.
- Carry out a safety review of rural bus stops to ensure they are all safe for all passengers waiting and getting on/off buses.
- Roll out audio visual to all buses, bus stops and stations in Northern Ireland.
- All infrastructures projects that include any form of new or improved pedestrian environment design and development should be required to adhere to the Inclusive Streets design principles.

Customer Experience

- Remove the requirement for wheelchair users to pre-book on some services.
- Staff should be trained to assist passengers getting in and out of the vehicle.
- Improve the physical and visual assistance at bus or rail stations and ensure stations are staffed when services are running.
- Increase the provision and frequency of services including evenings/weekends and extend the hours of community transport to beyond 6pm.
- Define and implement minimum standards for disability awareness and disability equality training for drivers, all transport staff and volunteers (including management) and monitor customer experience to assess the effectiveness of training in providing quality service to these users and to ensure consistency across transport services.
- Monitor the Blue Badge Scheme to ensure there is no abuse.
- Community transport services should not have cancellation fees given the unpredictable health of many of these users.
- Introduce a strategic and consistent approach to providing community transport services; for example, ensure consistency in the availability and frequency of community transport across all areas of Northern Ireland.
- Deliver integration between main stream public transport networks and community transport networks.
- Take forward initiatives to encourage driving improvement amongst older people and people with a disability and develop opportunities for young disabled people to learn to drive.
- Maximise the number of community transport vehicles that are wheel chair accessible and promote an increase in the number of wheelchair accessible taxis.
- Monitor and feed into the development of new Taxi Regulations to ensure fairness and equality for people with a disability and particularly guide dog and wheelchair users.
- Monitor and improve taxi driver training with involvement of disabled people.
- Develop and make available 'Travel Training' for older people, people with learning difficulties and people with a disability who have never used public transport before and introduce a new "Transport Buddy" Scheme.
- Inclusion of 'early intervention' independent travel training in education programmes and support employment opportunities for people with a disability.
- Toilet facilities at bus and rail stations should be open and accessible in line with service departure and arrival times including early in the morning and late at night.

- Implement a system of regular mystery audits by older people and people with a disability on all public transport services. Remedy action plans to address any shortcomings which should then be agreed with providers, users and the Department.
- In consultation with individuals and organisations representing people with disability and older people, review the current concessionary fares scheme, to simplify the application process and work to ensure concessions are available to the people who need them.
- DRD, Translink and all community transport providers in Northern Ireland sign up to RNIB's Bus Guide and Charter.

Information

- Explore new ways to and actively provide more accurate, timely, accessible information on timetables, routes, charges and services generally and ensure that it is easy to understand and provided in different formats that meet the specific needs of all older people and people with a disability.
- Develop a new and more user friendly Translink Website including a more accessible journey planner and link with other transport service providers that are essential for older people and people with learning difficulties.
- Develop an efficient smartphone App to assist in all aspects of transport planning and to make journeys easier.
- Develop and advertise more information on the carriage of mobility scooters on public transport.
- Produce and promote accessibility maps in all major towns and cities in N.I. (similar to maps provided by Derry City Council) with disability and wheelchair/mobility scooter user information showing information such as the location of dropped kerbs, toilets and accessible buildings.
- Continue to monitor any existing and new travel training programmes to ensure they are effective.

Partnership Engagement

- Facilitate and promote close Partnership working.
- Involve organisations representing older people and people with a disability in every stage of the new Strategy including development and monitoring.
- Consult IMTAC on vehicle procurement at an early stage.

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- DRD to urgently and 'meaningful' engage with publicly funded community transport providers to address the issues raised in their responses.
 - Include representation from publicly funded community transport providers at all levels of the Integrated Passenger Transport Project.
 - Create a Transport Forum where all providers can discuss best practice to enhance quality of services.
 - Carry out more and better consultation on the challenges faced in relation to accessibility for those living in rural areas.
 - Ensure more diverse stakeholder representation in any future strategy work.
 - Maintain the existing partnership with Shopmobility service providers to ensure older people and people with mobility issues can link with the transport network.
 - Consider the appropriateness of key strategy objectives in relation to community transport looking at best practice in other areas such as Scotland.
 - Explore how best to improve the coverage of the public transport network across Northern Ireland.
 - Set up a cross departmental working group to address rural matters.
 - Establish an independent Disability Steering Group consisting of voluntary and community organisations to provide advice and guidance throughout the life of the strategy – this steering group would feed into the development and implementation of Delivery Plans.

Funding

- Secure and maintain adequate government funding for all community transport services.
- Secure funding to fully implement the Accessible Transport Strategy.
- Continue to support the concessionary fare scheme.
- Replace free travel for seniors aged 60 to 64 with free travel for all people registered partially sighted and those that cannot drive for medical reasons.
- Introduce concessionary travel for companions and carers.

NEXT STEPS

Having analysed the consultation responses the Department will now finalise the Strategy. This will involve engagement with transport providers, Government and the representatives of older people and people with a disability.

This engagement will also facilitate the development of a Delivery Plan to deliver the Strategy. Subject to the approval of the Executive we hope to be in a position to publish the new Accessible Transport Strategy and associated Delivery Plan later in 2016.

APPENDIX A

Respondents to Accessible Transport Strategy 2025 Consultation

Name	Organisation/Individual
O Steenson	Member of the public
A Stewart	Member of the public
T Gilliland	Member of the public
J Dickson	Member of the public
B M Fleming	Member of the public
A Cunningham	Member of the public
M Sheen	Member of the public
D Sweeney	Mencap, Omagh
O Hvattum	North Belfast Senior Citizens Forum
A Gamble	Age Sector Platform
A McMonagle	Member of the public
N Thompson	Member of the public
B McCartney	Barnardo's Disabled Children & Young Peoples Project
P Gordon	Member of the public
S Swift	Member of the public
O Thompson	Member of the public

S Cunningham	Member of the public
P McCann	West Belfast 50+ Forum
M McMahon	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
P Cullinan	Member of the public
R Clyde	RDA Coleraine
W Neilly	Member of the public
E McGarrity	Member of the public
L Hughes	Association for Real Change (Northern Ireland) ARC NI
TILLI Advocacy Group	TILLI Advocacy Group- Association for Real Change ARC NI
C Moore	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
G Maguire M.B.E.	Member of the public
D McCloskey	Mid & East Antrim Age Well Partnership
B Delargy	Cushendall Development Group
A Irwin	Member of the public
D Irwin	Armagh Rural Transport Ltd
I Stewart	Visually Impaired Club (VIP Club)

Name	Organisation/Individual
K Keenan	Health & Social Care Board
M Cleary	Member of the public
M Spence	Tandem and Walking Group
U Rowan	Glens Social Club
A Martin	Member of the public
T Mc Closkey	The Glens Community Association
A Mc Alinden	Bessbrook Stroke Survivors
M Mc Cormack	Glenshane Community Development Limited
C Ward	Member of the public
V Kelly	The Cedar Foundation
M Morrison	Greater Belfast Seniors Forum
R Buchanan	Fermanagh Community Transport
J Donnelly	Good Morning Neighbour
M Farquhar	Shopmobility Mid Ulster
C Mc Evoy	Parkinson's UK(in Northern Ireland)
E Mc Garrity	Leonard Cheshire Disability Lurgan
Disability Action	Disability Action
M Jones	Strule Erne Day Care
F Crudden	Ernevale Beacon Centre/Castlecroft Beacon Centre

B McFadden	Community Navigator for Older People Causeway Locality
U Scullion	Agewell
A M Fox	Diamond Senior Citizens' Club
C Sugden MLA	Minister of Legislative Assembly
G Hughes	Rathfriland Royal British Legion
P Moorhead	Hilltop Golf Society
M T Conway	Omagh Forum for Rural Associations
J O'Hara	Causeway Older Active Strategic Team (C.O.A.S.T.)
N Mc Crickard	County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN)
S G Thompson	St John's Church Lurgan
A Forbes	South West Age Partnership
T Butler	Translink
F Johnston	Volunteer Now

Name	Organisation/Individual
E McAleer	Member of the public
Andrew Murdock	Guide Dogs in Northern Ireland
B Vance	NICHS Armagh Stroke Group
A Mc Creesh	Mid Ulster District Council
B Moore	North Coast Community Transport
J Doogan	Hartford Community Development and Cultural Association
A Keane	Out and About Community Transport
L Mc Kendry	CAN – Compass Advocacy Network
S Bell	Member of the public
P Mc Gurn	Lakeland Community Care Ltd
E Mc Cracken	Belfast City Centre Management Company
P Martin M.B.E.	Bridge Accessible Transport
P Mc Keown	Age NI
M Byrne	The Cosy Club c/o Hilltown Community Association
L Jamieson	Member of the public
E B McCullough	Alzheimer's Society in Northern Ireland
S Hamilton	Member of the public
B Knox	Member of the public

M Donnelly	Member of the public
M Hughes	Member of the public
J Mc Farland	Member of the public
I Crozier	Member of the public
M Mallon	Member of the public
M Mc Kernan	Member of the public
M Fullerton	Member of the public
M Johnston	Member of the public
M Nugent	Member of the public
A Mc Kernan	Member of the public
W Conn	Member of the public
M Bradley	Garvagh and District Diamond Club
J Clydesdale	Member of the public
A Kirkwood	Member of the public
S Dickson	Member of the public
O Kells	Member of the public
B Foster	Member of the public

Name	Organisation/Individual
G Mitchell	Member of the public
J O'Hara	Member of the public
N O'Hara	Member of the public
B Mc Conaghy	Member of the public
D Cooper	Member of the public
J Fleming	Member of the public
M Cinnamond	Member of the public
A Richardson	Member of the public
S Davis	Member of the public
N Douglas	Member of the public
E Doyle-King	Member of the public
D Hunter	Member of the public
J Baxter	Member of the public
M Grant	Member of the public
M Black	Burnfoot Seniors Group
L Scott	Broughshane & District Community Association Ltd
M Boyle	Member of the public
E Armstrong	Member of the public
R Lavery	Member of the public

M Devlin	Member of the public
M B Mc Manus	Member of the public
P Hegarty	Member of the public
N O'Carolan	Member of the public
C Brolly	Member of the public
E Burke	Gortnaghey Community Association
I Dunlop	Ballymoney Evergreen Club
P Mc Closkey	Member of the public
S Murphy	Member of the public
T Barker	Henry Court Tenants
L Moffett	Ballymoney Community Resource Centre
N Somerville	Be Safe Be Well
G Rose	Alpha Housing
J O'Kane	Dromboughill Community Association
A Begley	Magilligan Community Playgroup
C Bennett	Member of the public
P Drinan	Member of the public

Name	Organisation/Individual
K Smyth	Northern Ireland Local Government Association
Benedy Management Committee	Benedy Management Committee
B Foster	Member of the public
K Carson	Member of the public
P Davidson	Member of the public
A Mc Keown	Member of the public
L Mc Keever	Member of the public
Geraldine	Member of the public
David	Member of the public
B Murray	Member of the public
A M Houston	Member of the public
M Joyce	Member of the public
C Mc Philemy	Member of the public
K Wright	Member of the public
C Quigley	Member of the public
G Gorman	Member of the public
M Mc Shane	Member of the public
Y Neil	Member of the public
Dr S Mc Cabe	Northern Ireland Environment Link

R Wilson	Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT)
B Groves	Newry & Mourne Community Transport
S Kennerley	The Consumer Council
B Scullion	CDM Community Transport
Dr B Harris	Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland
S Bukowski	Shopmobility Northern Ireland
R Wilson	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
J Dunseath	Good Morning Causeway
N O'Neill	Mid & East Antrim Borough Council
M Heap	Member of the public
K Doherty	Disability Action
K Armstrong	Community Transport Association (CTA)
P Mc Eldowney	Easilink Community Transport
Dr J Witherow	RNIB NI
F Cole	Mencap in Northern Ireland
M Dolan	Western Health & Social Care Trust

Name	Organisation/Individual
J McEaney	Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NIVCA)
T O'Reilly	North West Forum of People with Disabilities
G Clifford	Action on Hearing Loss
M Mullin	Moving On Project – Leonard Cheshire Disability NI
A Keane	Community Transport Network NI
I Wilson	DART Partnership
L Smith	Patient and Client Council
R Bloomfield	Drumbeg Women's Institute
Dr A Cassidy MBE	Autism NI
M Lorimer	IMTAC
R Mullan	Member of the public
Andrew	Member of the public
B Donaghy	Member of the public
Anon (19)	Member of the public

Accessible Transport Strategy

2025

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Summary of Responses
May 2016

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