

Analysis of responses to the Bath and North East Somerset Council Coach Parking Strategy Engagement Process

Introduction

Bath and North East Somerset Council undertook concurrent public consultations on a proposed Parking Strategy and a Coach Parking Strategy in September and October 2017, including online information and feedback gathering as well as public events. As part of the engagement process for the Coach Parking Strategy a short survey was conducted and stakeholder organisations, particularly resident associations also took the opportunity to write to the council to express their views.

The strategy was developed by consultants Buro Happold for the Council's Project Delivery team tasked with delivery of the Bath Quays development. The strategy engagement process was run by the team and was publicised by:

- Web site, which received 151 'unique page visits' during the engagement period although many fewer visitors submitted survey responses (of the 63 total surveys responses some were completed on paper at stakeholder events);
- Presentation of the strategy to key stakeholders and request that they respond to the engagement questionnaire.

The survey was completed either online or on paper at engagement events or subsequently and then processed online by a council officer so that both sets of responses were combined in one dataset.

Who responded

Responses included questionnaire returns and letters to the project team. A total of 63 responses were made to the survey including one from a B&NES officer and three from resident associations and these were transferred to the 'stakeholder' letter responses group, summarised separately in this report. Therefore the numbers and percentages reported below are based on a total of 59 responses.

48 (or 81%) of these responses were made by persons identifying themselves as 'residents' followed by 'business' (5), 'coach operator' (2), 'coach driver' (1) and 'other' (3, including a 'Bath bus operator', a 'Bath worker' and a 'Bath resident and business owner').

Survey Results

In terms of the survey questions the first three were closed questions with a limited choice of responses and the results can therefore be represented graphically. Given that a large majority of responses were from individuals identifying themselves as 'residents' this subset has also been presented separately.

Q1: Proposed drop-off/pick-up locations.

“The proposed location for coach drop off/pick up are:

- *Green Park Road (4 spaces)*
- *Terrace Walk/Pierrepoint St (5/6 spaces)*
- *North Parade (2 spaces)*
- *Pulteney Road (3 spaces)*
- *Royal Parade (3 spaces).*

Do you agree that these are well positioned to serve the key visitor attractions?”

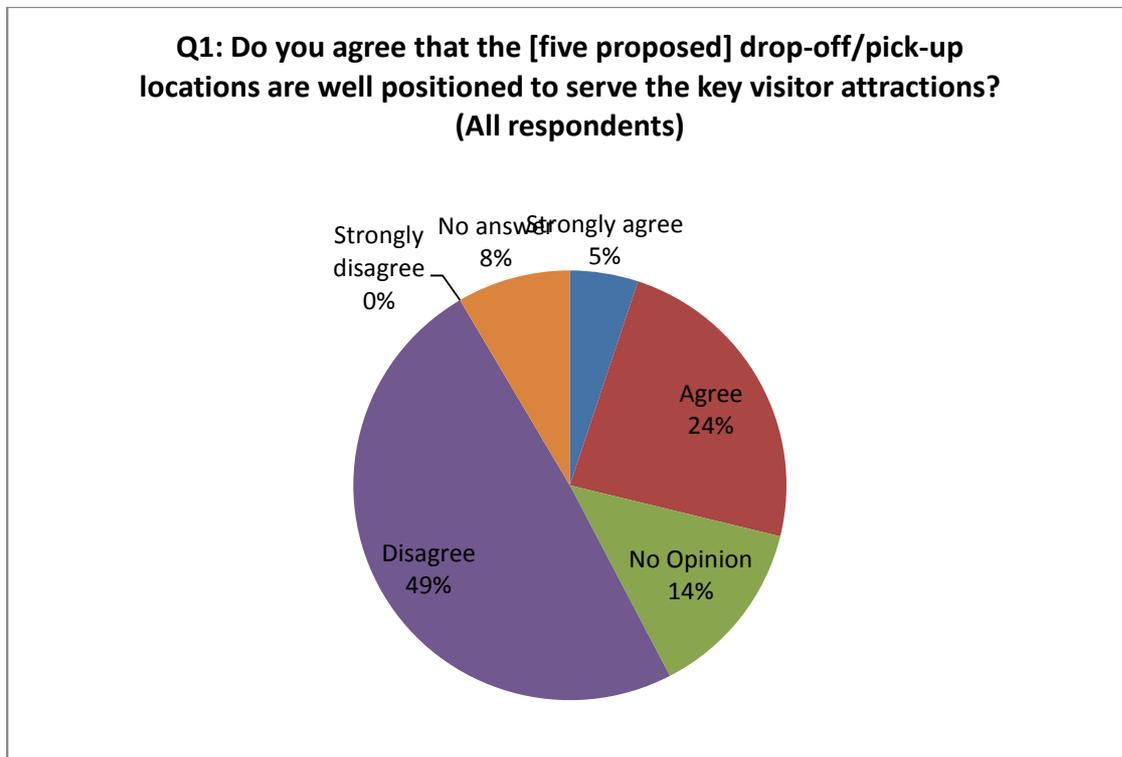


Figure 1 Q1 - All Responses

Q1: Do you agree that the [five proposed] drop-off/pick-up locations are well positioned to serve the key visitor attractions? (Resident respondents)

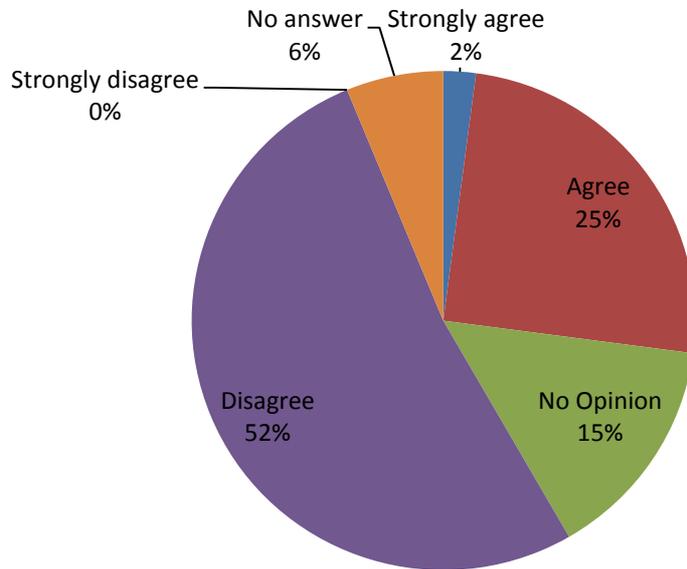


Figure 2 Q1 - Resident Responses

Question 2: Coach parking locations and drop-off/pick locations

“We are proposing to locate coach parking outside of the city at Odd Down Park & Ride, with coach drop off/pick up points located at the central locations listed above to serve visitor attractions. Do you agree that this will better meet the needs of the city?”

Q2: Do you agree that this will better meet the needs of the city? (All respondents)

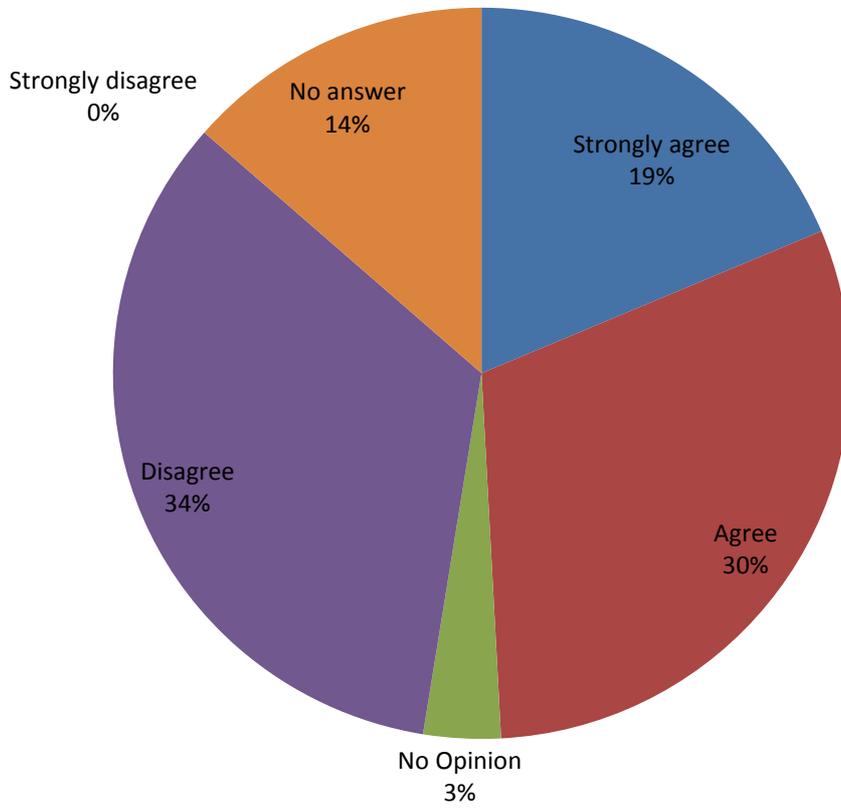


Figure 3 Q2 - All Responses

Q2: Do you agree that this will better meet the needs of the city? (Resident respondents)

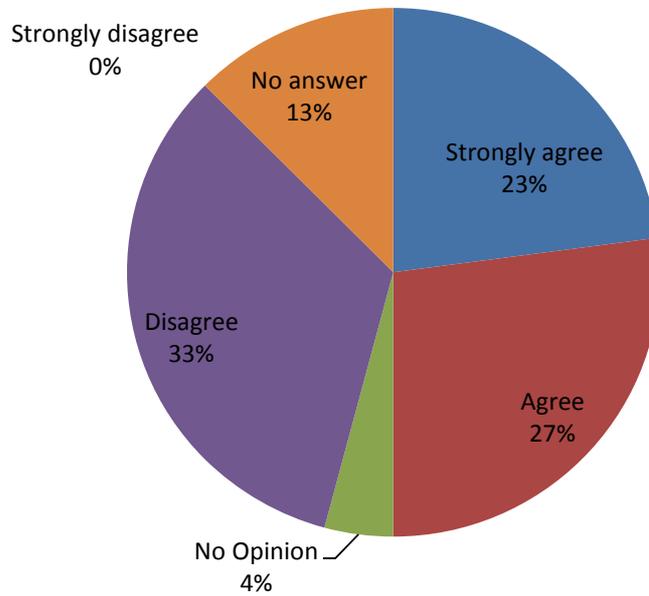


Figure 4 Q2 - Resident Respondents

Q3: Longer visits by coach in Bath

“The coach strategy aims to encourage longer dwell times for coaches, ideally in excess of 3 hours. Longer stays will improve the visitor experience and enhance the contribution to the economy. Do you agree that this aim will be good for the city?”

**Q3: Longer stays - do you agree that this aim will be good for the city?
(All respondents)**

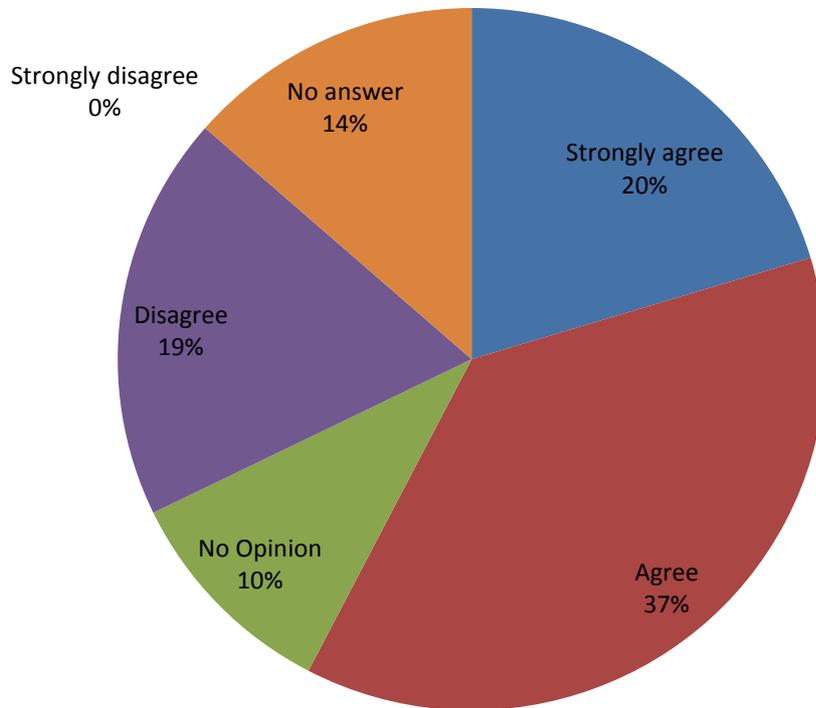


Figure 5 Q3 - All Responses

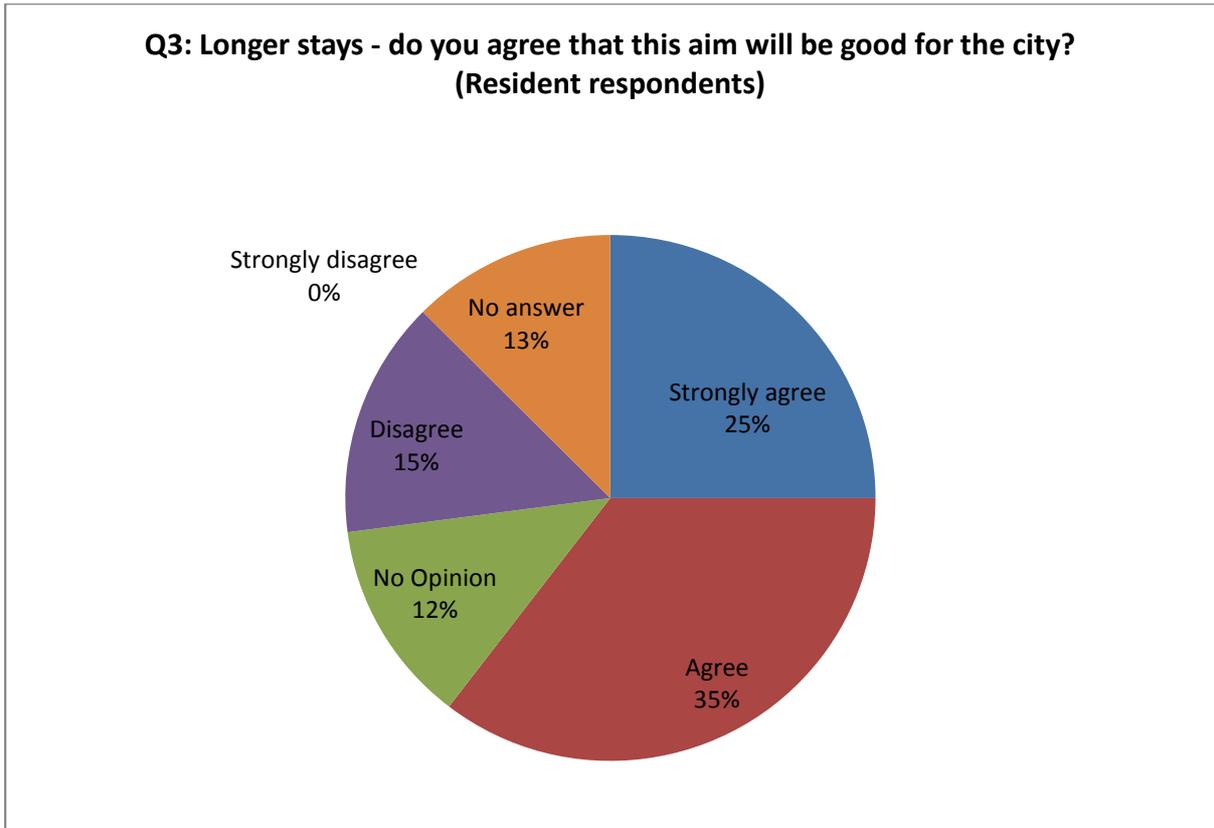


Figure 6 Q3 - Resident Respondents

Q4: Managing coaches outside Bath

“Within B&NES, are there any specific measures that will improve coach management in market towns or rural communities?”

Nearly all the comments under this question related to Bath specifically or possibly the district including Bath and were therefore added to and analysed as responses to question 5. **Error! Reference source not found.** provides a summary of responses to this question and the full responses are available in **Appendix C**. One comment relating to outside Bath was: *“Coaches should not enter the centre of market towns, but be parked just outside, on the perimeter from where “Park & Ride” type service can take tourists into the centre if necessary.”*

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| Q4 Response Type | Number |
|--|--------|
| General/District-wide relevance | 8 |
| Bath relevant | 11 |
| Other parts of the district (not Bath) | 1 |

Q5: General comments

“We welcome your general comments on our proposals”

The most important findings included:

- In terms of those making a clear, categorical statement, or whose submissions could reliably be interpreted as implying such a statement, of 59 respondents 1 expressed support for the strategy whereas 19% did not agree with the strategy.
- There was criticism of the report being too biased towards the coach sector and not giving enough weight to residents’ interests and the strategy being in conflict with other strategies and policies including the Getting Around Bath Transport Strategy and the Air Quality Action Plan.
- Comments on the problems associated with coaches were various and included: 27% of respondents (16 of 59) mentioned the need for better enforcement to manage coach parking or driving; concerns about pollution were also raised (25%) and congestion (14%). Whereas 19% (11 respondents) want coaches removed from the city centre, or their presence reduced, 2 want the opposite.
- Four respondents did not agree that drop-off/pick-up locations need to be close to the attractions and six stated opposition to the expansion of Terrace Walk in particular.
- Five respondents expressed regret at the changes that have been made to the Riverside coach park whilst one was in favour.
- Five of 59 respondents expressed support for coach parking at Odd Down Park and Ride and 11 expressed support for using other Park and Rides sites (or as well as Odd Down).
- One in five/20% (12 respondents) of the respondents specifically objected to the proposals for short stay coach parking at Green Park Road, citing primarily visual impact on the area but also mentioning practical problems such as safety. The postcodes, where given, of these respondents were generally from the same area.
- Two respondents objected to the Royal Avenue proposal and one objected to Pulteney Road.

Stakeholder response analysis

In addition to the survey nine letters in response to the consultation were also received from stakeholder organisations and a summary of their main points is provided in Table 1 Summary of Stakeholder Responses, which shows that they were generally opposed to the strategy. In the case of the various resident associations it is not known how many households they represent generally or specifically regarding views on the proposed strategy and therefore they have been analysed separately to responses from individual people.

Table 1 Summary of Stakeholder Responses

| Stakeholder | Summary |
|--|--|
| Bath Preservation Trust | The strategy should not try to increase number of coaches in the city and does not adequately consider residents and heritage values though coach tourism does in certain circumstances bring some benefits but in some cases none. Bath is sufficiently attractive that less convenient drop-off would be tolerated. Supports the Odd Down proposal provided associated infrastructure is delivered as planned. |
| Business West (Chamber of Commerce) | Doubts feasibility of Odd Down given its location and supports coach parking to east of city. |
| Demuths Cookery School | Raises (very detailed) issues with current operation of Terrace Walk and future proposals (the business is situated in Terrace Walk) |
| FOBRA | Strategy does not consider negative impacts of coaches, is not compatible with other strategies/policies and possible harm to WHS status. Air pollution in Terrace walk area mostly caused by buses and coaches. Welcomes Odd Down proposals but drop-off sites should be further out. Opposition to Green Park Road proposal mentioned specifically and asks for coach restrictions in the Circus area. |
| Circus Area RA | Strategy does not reflect impacts of coaches and the needs of residents. Disputes positive economic significance of coach tourism. Supports coach parking outside the city centre but opposes drop-off close to attractions. |
| Widcombe Assoc | Strategy too focussed on coach operators and better management needed to reduce e.g. pollution. Supports use of Odd Down but by using P&R buses rather than prior drop-off by coach. |
| Green Park RA | Specifically opposed to Green Park Road proposals but wants less coach traffic in city generally to e.g. reduce pollution and 'higher-quality tourism'. |
| Ainslies Belvedere and Caroline Place RA | Endorses FOBRA submission. Supports coach parking at P&R sites including Odd Down but opposes drop-off close to attractions. |
| Lansdown Crescent Assoc | Opposes coaches in city centre (congestion, pollution) but supports use of P&R sites. More enforcement needed. |

It can be seen that whilst the overall response included emphasis of the negative aspects of coach operation in central Bath particularly relating to coach movement and objecting to coach presence in the city centre there exists support for coach parking at locations such as the Odd Down Park and Ride site.

Appendix A: Consultation Questions

Section 1: Coach parking proposals

1. The proposed location for coach drop off/pick up are:

- Green Park Road (4 spaces)
- Terrace Walk/Pierrepoint St (5/6 spaces)
- North Parade (2 spaces)
- Pulteney Road (3 spaces)
- Royal Parade (3 spaces).

Do you agree that these are well positioned to serve the key visitor attractions?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- I don't have an opinion
- Disagree

2. We are proposing to locate coach parking outside of the city at Odd Down Park & Ride, with coach drop off/pick up points located at the central locations listed above to serve visitor attractions. Do you agree that this will better meet the needs of the city?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- I don't have an opinion
- Disagree

3. The coach strategy aims to encourage longer dwell times for coaches, ideally in excess of 3 hours. Longer stays will improve the visitor experience and enhance the contribution to the economy. Do you agree that this aim will be good for the city?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- I don't have an opinion
- Disagree

4. Within Bath and North East Somerset, are there any specific measures that will improve coach management in market towns or rural communities?

Comment:<box>

5. We welcome your general comments on our proposals:

<Comments BOX>

Section 2: About you

1. Please select from the following. I am:

- A coach operator
Where is your business located (Postcode)
How often do your Coaches visit Bath: Daily, Weekly, Fortnightly. Monthly, Annually
- Business
Where is your business located.....(Postcode)
- Coach Driver
- Resident
Where do you live in Bath.....(Postcode)
- Visitor
- Other:.....

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.