



Using Lancashire's transport information centres

Consultation report

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1. Executive summary

This report summarises the response to Lancashire County Council's consultation on the proposal to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station.

For the consultation, paper questionnaires were made available at all four transport information centres, as well as Carnforth Library due to Carnforth Railway Station being closed during part of the fieldwork period. The consultation questionnaire was also available online at www.lancashire.gov.uk.

The fieldwork ran for eight weeks between 5 March 2018 and 29 April 2018. In total, 877 completed questionnaires were returned (553 paper questionnaire responses and 324 online questionnaire responses).

1.1 Key findings

- In the last two years, over two-fifths of respondents have used the transport information centres at Carnforth Railway Station (44%) and Clitheroe Interchange (42%). A quarter of respondents have used the transport information centres at Preston Bus Station (25%) and about one in six respondents have used Nelson Interchange (17%).
- Over a quarter of respondents (26%) say that they have used these transport information centres a few times a week or more¹ in the last two years. Half of respondents (50%) say that they have used these transport information centres a few times a month.
- Respondents are most likely to say that they use transport information centres for timetables and public transport information (92%) and buying tickets (87%).
- Nearly all respondents are satisfied with the service that they receive from the transport information centres (93% very satisfied and 5% fairly satisfied).
- When asked about why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the service that they received from transport information centres, over three-quarters of respondents (77%) commented about the high quality of the service provided by the staff.
- Nine in ten respondents (90%) strongly disagree with the proposal to close the transport information centres and about a further one in twenty (4%) tend to disagree with the proposal. About one in twenty respondents (5%) agree² with the proposal.
- When asked why they agree or disagree with the proposal, respondents explained that the transport information centres act as community hubs that offer a useful/necessary public service (35%) and that not everyone has access to the internet, or is IT literate (21%).
- When asked how the proposal would impact on them, respondents explained that it would be inconvenient (33%) and that they would lose, or have reduced access to, the services provided by the transport information centres (33%).

¹ Respondents who said 'every or most days' or 'a few times a week'

² Respondents who 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree'

- When asked how they would find out about public transport services or buy tickets if this proposal happened, about two-fifths of respondents say they don't know (39%), a quarter of respondents say they would visit another information centre or ticket office (25%) and about a quarter say they would buy tickets online through a website, smartphone app or by telephone (24%).
- About two-thirds of respondents (65%) say that, if the proposal happened, it would mean that they travel less often than now. About a quarter of respondents (24%) say that it would mean that they travel about the same as now.
- The most common idea for how the transport information centres could stay open and operational was that the opening times/staffing levels could be reviewed/reduced (15%).
- During the consultation period five expressions of interest (EOI) relating to potentially taking over running one or more of the transport information centres were received. One related to all four information centres, one to the Clitheroe Interchange, two to Carnforth Railway Station and one to Nelson Interchange. Lancaster City Council also asked for more time to be made available before funding is withdrawn, so that they can progress discussions with relevant organisation to explore alternative arrangements for running Carnforth Railway Station Transport Information Centre. Ribble Valley Borough Council also informed us that they are in contact with Northern Rail over how to collectively support the Clitheroe Interchange and they invited us to take part in this process.

2. Introduction

We are committed to providing the best services we can to the people of Lancashire, particularly to the most vulnerable in our communities. However the council's financial position remains extremely challenging, with a forecasted funding gap of £144m in 2021/22. Because of this, we still need to make some difficult decisions in order to make further savings.

On 7 December 2017 the county council's Cabinet agreed to consult on proposals to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station.

Train operating companies and bus operators use a number of ways to make it easier for their passengers to get information about their services and to buy travel tickets both at local stations and online.

We know that many people value the services provided by these information centres and we would like to hear your views on the proposed closures. This consultation was designed to help us better understand the effect on the people who use these centres.

3. Methodology

For the consultation, paper questionnaires made available at all four transport information centres, as well as Carnforth Library due to Carnforth Railway Station being closed during part of the fieldwork period. The consultation questionnaire was also available online at www.lancashire.gov.uk. 456 stakeholders were emailed at the beginning of the consultation to inform them that the consultation had started and that they could respond online.

The fieldwork ran for eight weeks between 5 March 2018 and 29 April 2018. In total, 877 completed questionnaires were returned (553 paper questionnaire responses and 324 online questionnaire responses).

The main section of the questionnaire included 11 questions. The remainder of the questionnaire asked for information about the respondents. For example, if they are a Lancashire resident, or a private sector company/organisation. This information is presented in appendix 1. The main section of the questionnaire covered two main topics: respondents use of transport information centres; and respondents views on the proposal to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station. The questions about the proposal asked respondents: how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal; how they would find out about public transport services or buy tickets; and if they would travel by public transport more, less often or about the same. There were also three open comments boxes for respondents to further explain their views on the proposals.

In this report respondents' responses to the open questions have been classified against a coding frame to quantify the qualitative data. Coding is the process of

combining the issues, themes and ideas in qualitative open responses into a set of codes. The codes are given meaningful names that relate to the issue, so that during close reading of responses it can be seen when similar issues relate to a similar code. As the analysis process continues the coding frame is added to and refined as new issues are raised by respondents. All responses to open questions are then coded against the coding frame, and can be subsequently analysed as quantitative data.

3.1 Limitations

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

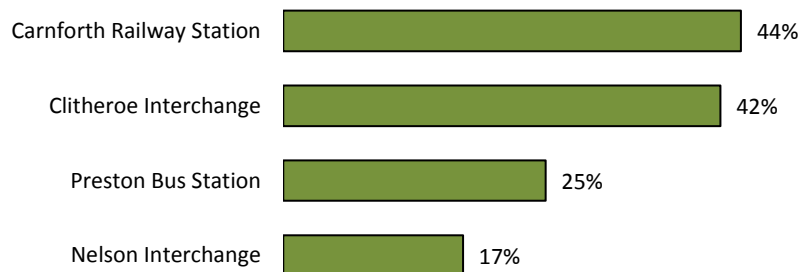
4. Main findings

4.1 Use of Lancashire's transport information centres

Respondents were first asked which of the following Lancashire transport information centres they have used in the last two years.

In the last two years, over two-fifths of respondents have used transport information centres at Carnforth Railway Station (44%) and Clitheroe Interchange (42%). A quarter of respondents have used the transport information centre at Preston Bus Station (25%) and about one in six respondents have used Nelson Interchange (17%).

Chart 1 - Which of the following Lancashire transport information centres have you used in the last two years?

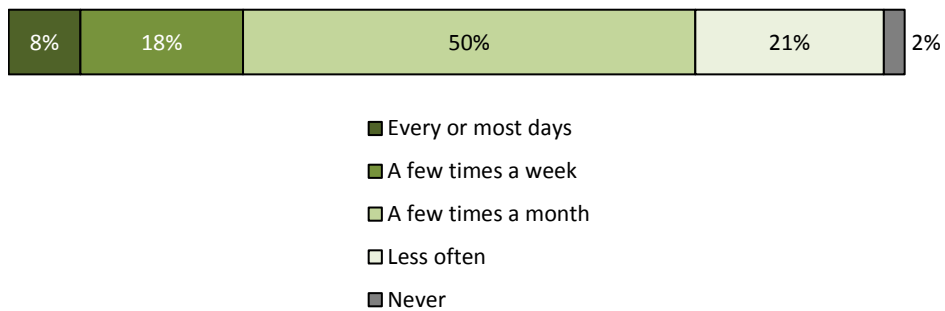


Base: all respondents (854)

Respondents were asked how often, on average, they have used these transport information centres in the last two years.

Over a quarter of respondents (26%) say that they have used these transport information centres a few times a week or more³ in the last two years. Half of respondents (50%) say that they have used these transport information centres a few times a month.

Chart 2 - On average, how often have you used these transport information centres in the last two years?

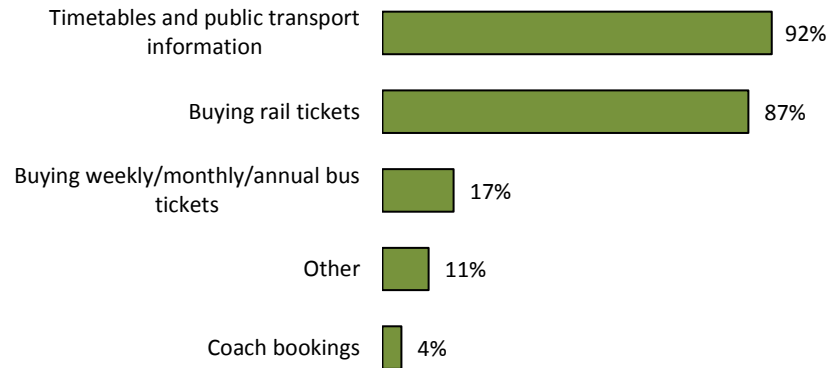


Base: all respondents (860)

³ Respondents who said 'every or most days' or 'a few times a week'

Respondents are most likely to say that they use transport information centres for timetables and public transport information (92%) and buying tickets (87%).

Chart 3 - What do you use the transport information centres for?

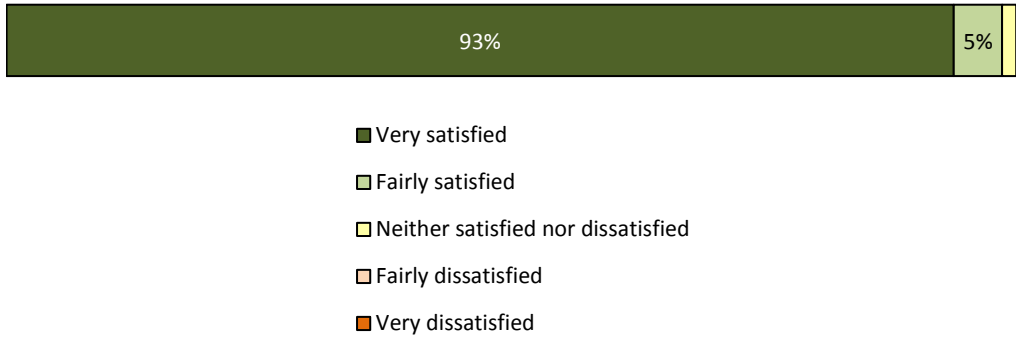


Base: all respondents (849)

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the service that they receive from the transport information centres.

Nearly all respondents are satisfied with the service that they receive from the transport information centres (93% very satisfied and 5% fairly satisfied).

Chart 4 - How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service you receive from the transport information centres?



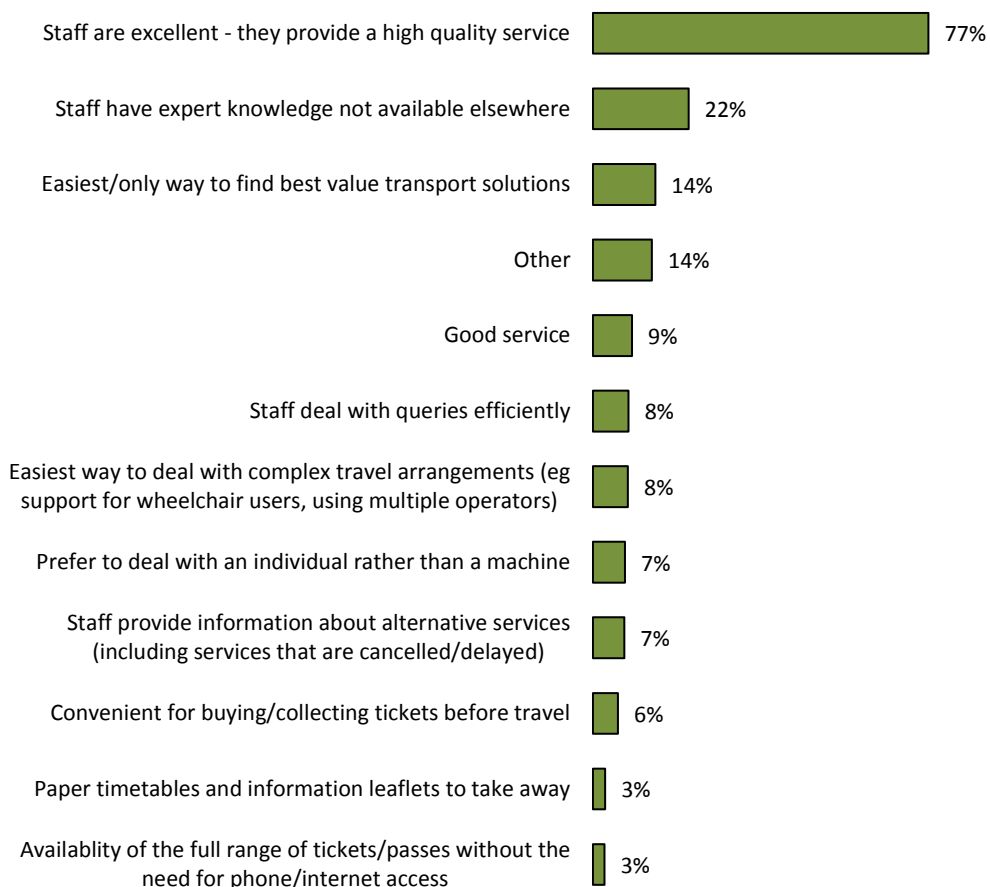
Base: all respondents (704)

Respondents were then given the opportunity, using an open comment box, to explain why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the service. The information presented in chart 5 is the result of the coding process outlined in section 3.

Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) provided a comment about the staff being excellent and providing a high quality service. About one in ten respondents (9%) provided a general comment about it being a good service.

Many respondents' comments also focused on the fact that the transport information centres give them easy/convenient access to things they can't get, or can't get easily, elsewhere. The most common responses of this type were: staff have expert knowledge not available elsewhere (22%); easiest/only way to find best value transport solutions (14%); easiest way to deal with complex travel arrangements (eg support for wheelchair users using multiple operators) (8%); staff provide information about alternative services (including services that are cancelled/delayed) (7%); and convenient for buying/collecting tickets before travel (6%).

Chart 5 - Why do you say this?



Base: all respondents (745)

4.2 Agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the proposal to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station.

Nine in ten respondents (90%) strongly disagree with the proposal and about a further one in twenty (4%) tend to disagree with the proposal. About one in twenty respondents (5%) agree⁴ with the proposal.

Chart 6 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station?



Base: all respondents (868)

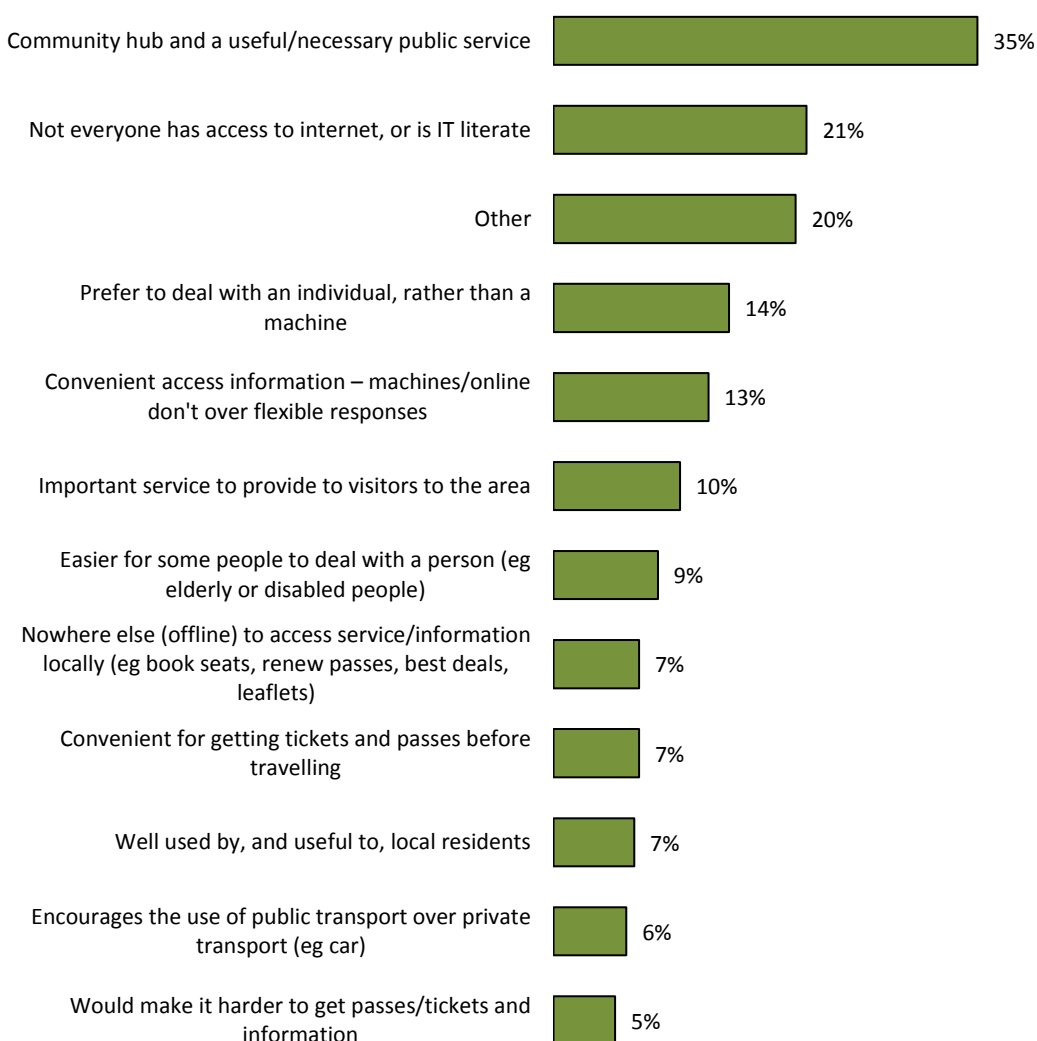
⁴ Respondents who 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree'

Respondents were then given the opportunity, using an open comment box, to explain their reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal to close the council's transport information centres at Preston Bus Station, Nelson Interchange, Clitheroe Interchange and Carnforth Railway Station.

The information presented in chart 7 is the result of the coding process outlined in section 3.

The most frequent response was that the transport information centres act as community hubs that offer a useful/necessary public service (35%) and that not everyone has access to the internet, or is IT literate (21%).

Chart 7 - Why do you say this?



Base: all respondents (773)

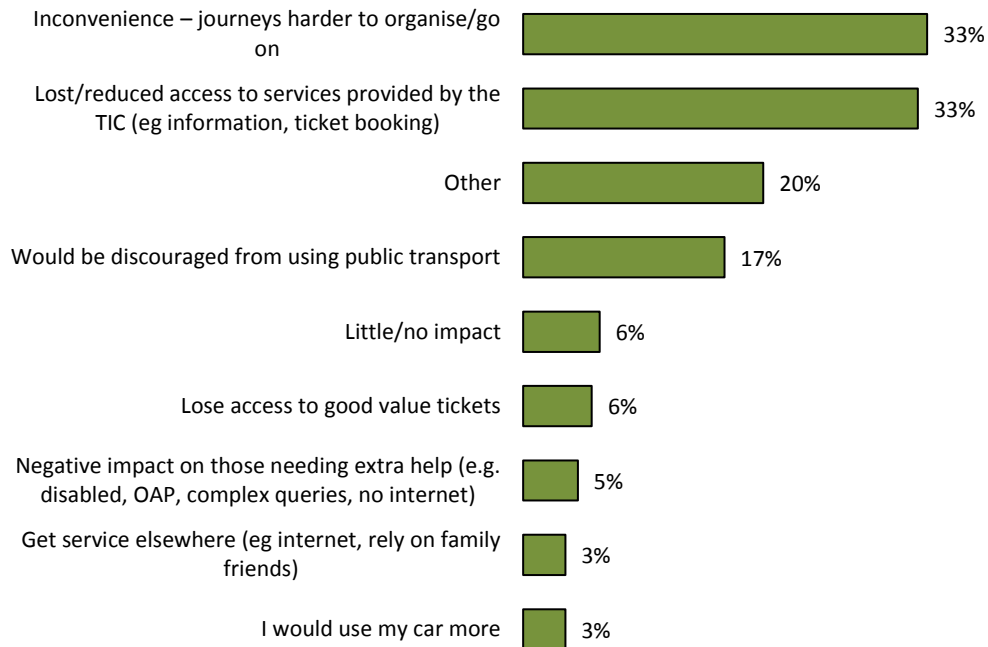
4.3 Impact of the proposal

Respondents were asked to explain how the proposal would impact on them if it happened.

The information presented in chart 11 is the result of the coding process outlined in section 3.

The most common responses were that it would be inconvenient (33%) and that they would lose, or have reduced access to, the services provided by the transport information centres (33%).

Chart 8 - If the proposal happened, how would this impact on you?

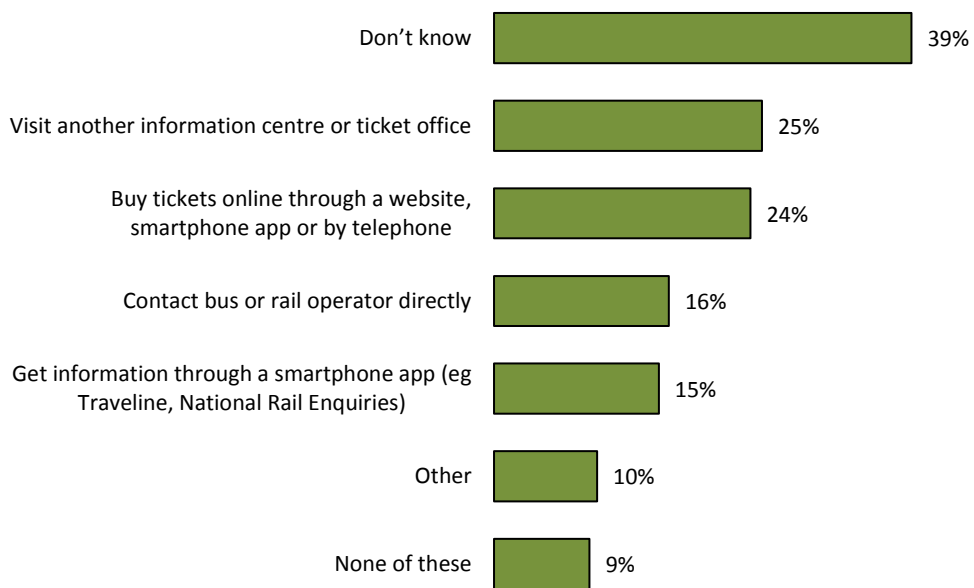


Base: all respondents (775)

Respondents were asked how they would find out about public transport services or buy tickets if this proposal happened.

About two-fifths of respondents say they don't know (39%), a quarter of respondents say they would visit another information centre or ticket office (25%) and about a quarter say they would buy tickets online through a website, smartphone app or by telephone (24%).

Chart 9 - If the proposal happened, how would you find out about public transport services or buy tickets?

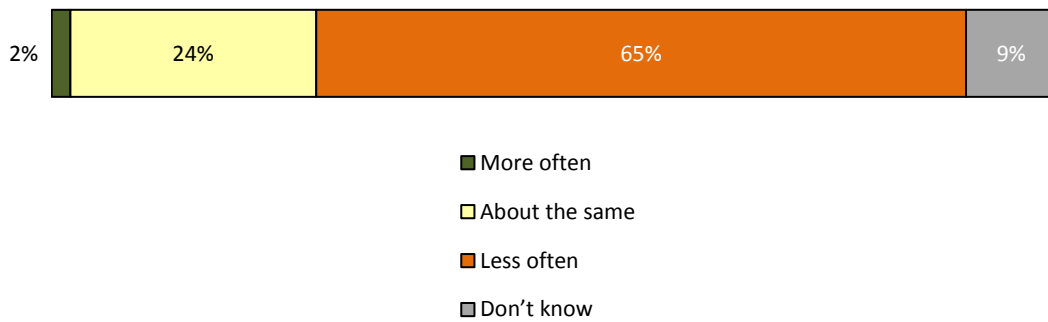


Base: all respondents (853)

Respondents were asked, if the proposal happened, would this mean they travel by public transport more often, less often or about the same as now.

About two-thirds of respondents (65%) say that, if the proposal happened, it would mean that the travel less often than now. About a quarter of respondents (24%) say that it would mean that they travel about the same as now.

Chart 10 - If the proposal happened, would this mean you travel by public transport more often, less often or about the same as now?



Base: all respondents (855)

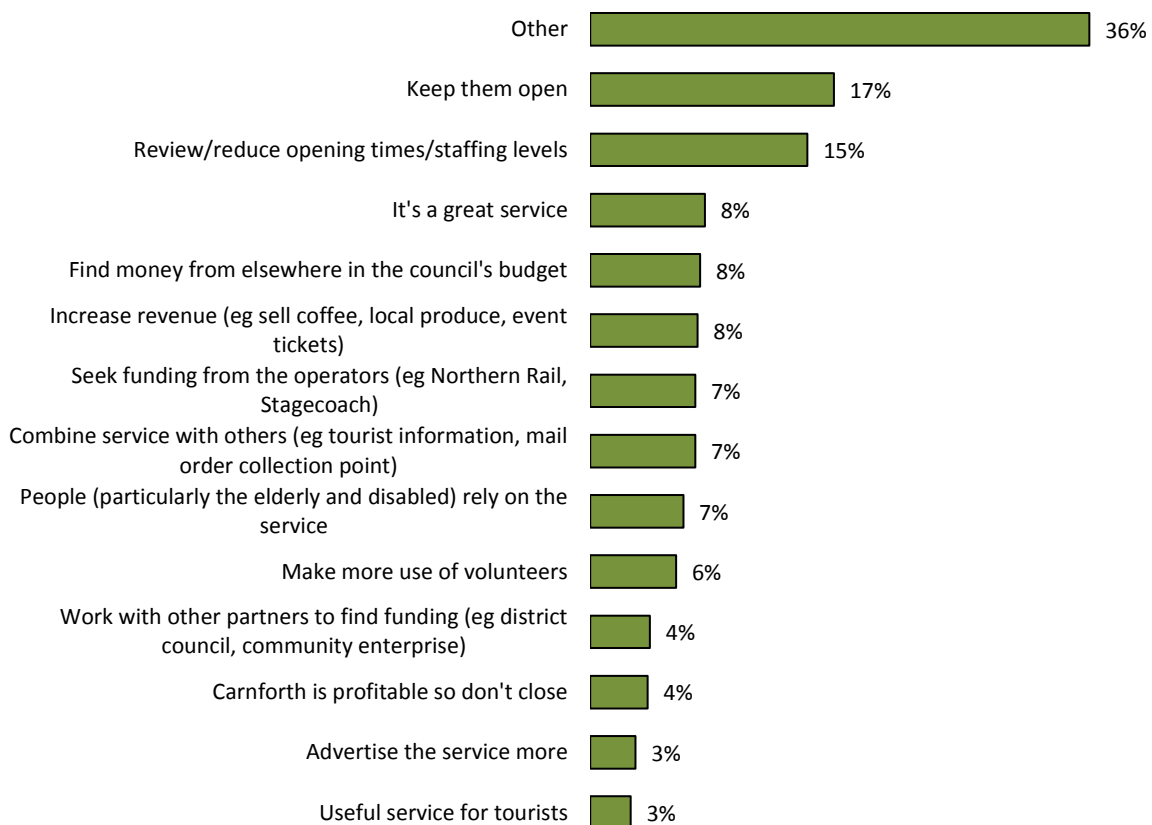
4.4 Any other comments about the proposals

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any suggestions about how the transport information centres could stay open and operational, or if there was anything else that they wanted to tell us about the transport information centres.

The information presented in chart 8 is the result of the coding process outlined in section 3.

Most of the comments received could not easily be grouped into themes or occurred in such a low number that that were coded as other (36%). The most common responses were that we should keep them open (17%) and we should review/reduce the opening times/staffing levels (15%).

Chart 11 - Do you have any suggestions about how the transport information centres could stay open and operational, or anything else you'd like to tell us about the transport information centres?



Base: all respondents (588)

5. Petitions, letters and expressions of interest

5.1 Petitions

Three petitions were received during the consultation period. One relating to Carnforth Railway Station Ticket Office and two relating to Clitheroe Interchange Transport Information Centre.

Bolton-le-Sands Women's Institute submitted a petition to keep Carnforth Railway Station Ticket Office open that included 35 signatories.

The Ribble Valley Labour Party submitted a petition on the proposed closure of Clitheroe Interchange Transport Information Centre that included 685 signatories.

A petition opposing the proposed closure of Clitheroe Interchange Transport Information Centre was submitted that included 88 signatories representing 74 local businesses. This petition was also cited by Nigel Evans MP in voicing his written opposition to the closure of Clitheroe Interchange Transport Information Centre.

5.2 Letters and emails

5.2.1 Carnforth Railway Station letters and emails

An email objecting to the proposal for Carnforth Railway Station was received from Yealand Redmayne Parish Council, Over Kellet Parish Council and Silverdale Parish Council.

A further 55 letters and emails were received from members of the public and local organisations asking the council to reconsider its proposals for the Carnforth Railway Station Information Centre.

5.2.2 Clitheroe Interchange letters and emails

A letter was received from Ribble Valley Borough Council formally objecting to the county council's withdrawal of funding from the interchange. Emails objecting to the proposal were also received from Ribchester Parish Council and Barrow Parish Council.

A further 14 letters and emails were received from members of the public and local organisations asking the council to reconsider its proposals for the Clitheroe Interchange Information Centre.

5.2.3 Preston Bus Station letters and emails

An email objecting to the proposal for Preston Bus Station was received from Whittingham Parish Council.

5.2.4 Overall proposal letters and emails

Two letters were received from Travel Watch and Leeds Morecambe Community Rail Partnership Co Ltd, which asked the council to reconsider the proposals for Lancashire's transport information centres.

5.3 Expressions of interest

During the consultation period five expressions of interest (EOI) relating to potentially taking over running one or more of the transport information centres were received. One related to all four information centres, one to the Clitheroe Interchange, two to Carnforth Railway Station and one to Nelson Interchange.

Lancaster City Council also asked for more time to be made available before funding is withdrawn, so that they can progress discussions with relevant organisation to explore alternative arrangements for running Carnforth Railway Station Transport Information Centre.

Ribble Valley Borough Council also informed us that they are in contact with Northern Rail over how to collectively support the Clitheroe Interchange and they invited us to take part in this process.

Appendix 1 - Demographic breakdown

Table 1- Are you responding to this consultation as...?

	%
A Lancashire resident	96%
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	28%
Other	7%
A local business owner	5%
An employee of Lancashire County Council	3%
An elected member of a parish or town council in Lancashire	3%
A private sector company/organisation	2%
An elected member of a Lancashire district council	0%
An elected member of Lancashire County Council	0%

Base: all respondents (851)

Table 2- Are you...?

	%
Male	40%
Female	54%
Prefer not to say	6%

Base: all respondents (852)

Table 3- Have you ever identified as transgender?

	%
Yes	1%
No	87%
Prefer not to say	12%

Base: all respondents (782)

Table 4- What was your age on your last birthday?

	%
Under 16	<1%
16-19	1%
20-34	5%
35-64	35%
65-74	34%
75+	17%
Prefer not to say	7%

Base: all respondents (856)

Table 5- Are you a deaf person or do you have a disability?

	%
Yes	15%
No	75%
Prefer not to say	10%

Base: all respondents (833)

Table 6- Which best describes your ethnic background?

	%
White	87%
Asian or Asian British	1%
Black or Black British	<1%
Mixed	<1%
Other	<1%
Prefer not to say	11%

Base: all respondents (839)

Table 7- What is your religion?

	%
No religion	22%
Christian (including CofE, Catholic, Protestant and all other denominations)	59%
Buddhist	<1%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	1%
Sikh	0%
Any other religion	1%
Prefer not to say	16%

Base: all respondents (834)

Table 8- What is your sexual orientation?

	%
Straight (heterosexual)	77%
Bisexual	1%
Gay man	1%
Lesbian/gay woman	<1%
Other	<1%
Prefer not to say	20%

Base: all respondents (807)

Table 9- Are there any children or young people in your household aged under 20?

	%
No, but expecting	4%
Yes, aged under 5	3%
Yes, aged 5-8	3%
Yes, aged 9-11	4%
Yes, aged 12-16	7%
Yes, aged 17-19	5%
No children aged under 20	72%
Prefer not to say	10%

Base: all respondents (828)

Table 10- Are there any disabled young people aged 20-25 in your household?

	%
Yes	2%
No	88%
Prefer not to say	10%

Base: all respondents (834)

Table 11- Does your household have access to the internet (dial-up, broadband or mobile internet)?

	%
Yes	69%
No	16%
Don't know	1%
Prefer not to say	14%

Base: all respondents (844)