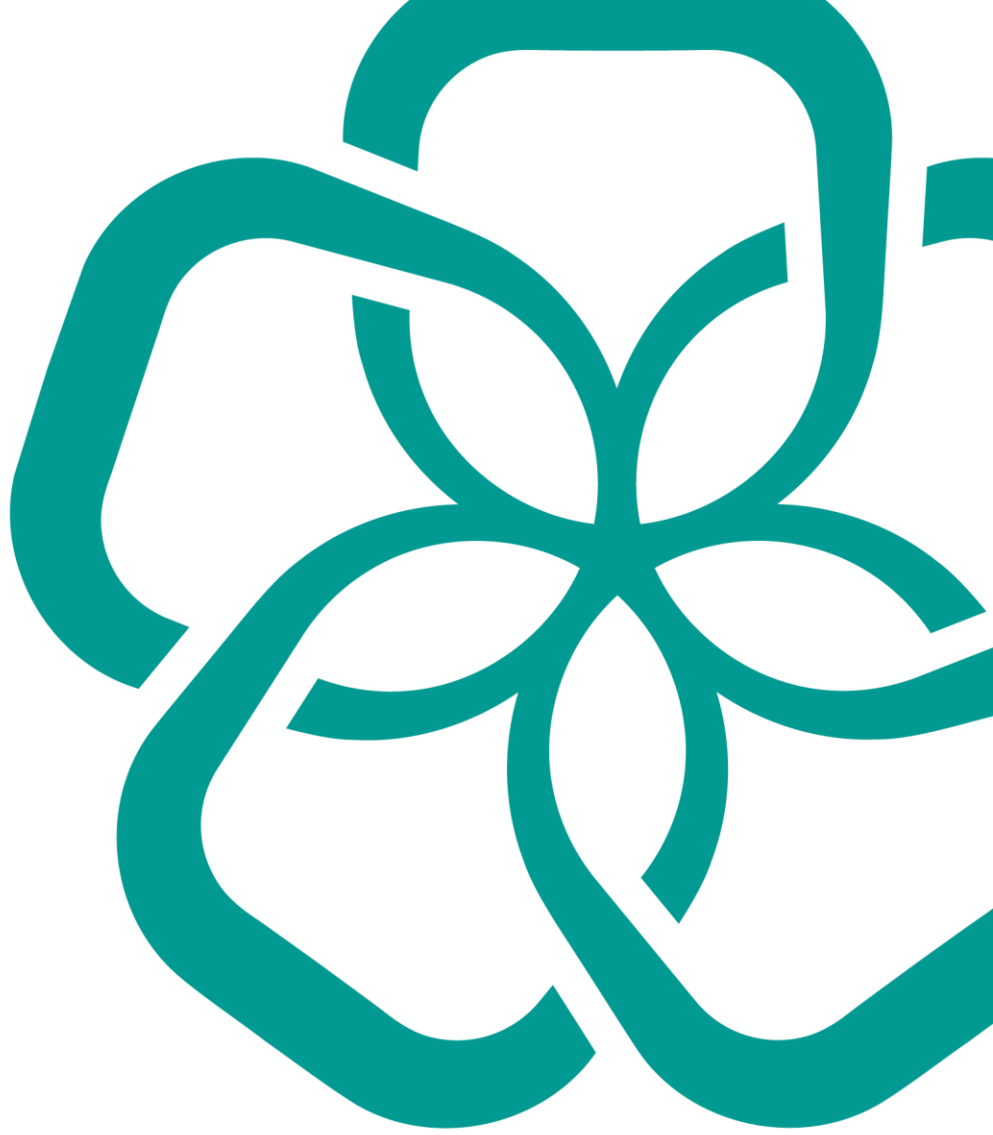




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On Board Buses

Consultation Outcome Report – Executive Summary

Communities, Consultation and Engagement Team, February 2026

Executive summary

This is a short summary of the findings from the On Board Buses public consultation into the design of West Yorkshire's buses. A copy of the full Consultation Outcome Report can be found on Your Voice: www.yourvoice.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/onboardbuses

In 2024, the Mayor of West Yorkshire made the decision to bring buses back under local control in the biggest shake-up of our region's transport network in decades. The Weaver Network puts people at the heart, ensuring buses truly serve the needs of our communities. We are working hard for this to happen from April 2027, including investing in the Weaver Network buses.

We wanted to hear from you about what you want to see on our new buses. During the consultation held between Tuesday 11 November and Sunday 21 December 2025, we asked you to tell us your thoughts about features on the new buses, including:

- Connecting on the go (wi-fi and charging your device)
- Staying comfortable with the right temperature and seat fabric
- Seating for those who need it most
- Accessibility, including ramps and space for wheelchair users and prams
- Other features such as flooring, audio alerts telling you the journey progress and stops and display screens

As well as the online questionnaire, additional activities were undertaken to hear from a range of demographic groups, including seldom heard groups:

1. Working with six voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) partner organisations to speak to over 500 people in round table discussions and supported questionnaire sessions about the On Board Buses Consultation
2. Meeting with six accessibility groups and their members to gather their feedback
3. Working with a research agency to deliver focus groups and depth interviews to gather qualitative feedback from a range of demographic groups
4. Engaging with a group of 30 primary school children (aged nine to 10 years old).

Overall response to the consultation

In total, there were 4,927 responses to the consultation survey and 1,180 people were involved in other qualitative feedback methods as presented below.

Questionnaire analysis

We asked closed (quantitative) and open (qualitative) questions. Closed (quantitative) questions give fixed options for people to choose from, whilst open (qualitative) questions let people answer in their own words. We have analysed the open question responses (referred to as 'open comments') by finding common themes and grouping responses to these themes. The common themes were counted to understand how frequently topics were mentioned.

Cross tabulation is a method used to summarise the relationship between the results of two questions. Responses to questions were cross tabulated to help us identify patterns or correlations between the results.

Analysis of other feedback methods

For group discussions, we analysed the feedback by identifying common themes. We reviewed everything participants told us and looked for common topics, including suggestions or concerns. We also noted how often these themes were mentioned. This feedback, along with the questionnaire results, represent the consultation outcomes for consideration to inform decisions on bus designs.

Category	Engagement type	Number
Written feedback	Full questionnaire	4,927 responses
Consultation event or activity	Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) engagement	Approximately 500 people in round table discussions and supported questionnaire sessions
Consultation event or activity	Six accessibility groups	84 people
Consultation event or activity	Focus groups (four focus groups and two in depth interviews)	26 people
Consultation event or activity	Primary school engagement during a pre-arranged Mayor of West Yorkshire's visit	30 children (nine to 10 year olds)
Consultation event or activity	Drop-in events across West Yorkshire (11 events in shopping centres, bus stations, retail parks)	Approximately 500 people
Consultation event or activity	West Yorkshire Mayor's Question Time, Bradford and Kirklees	40 people
Campaign (i.e. an organised campaign on a specific issue)	Campaign response*	One campaign, 137 responses

* There was one campaign response to the consultation, via a petition to make buses in West Yorkshire quicker, safer and more accessible to use. In total 137 named individuals signed the petition and this has been analysed collectively.

Findings

About your use of buses in West Yorkshire

Consultation findings revealed that current bus users were highly engaged, as 64 per cent of respondents used the bus frequently (more than three times a week) and a further 18 per cent used buses once or twice a week.

While travel for leisure was the primary reason for bus use at 64 per cent, significant proportions of bus journeys were to visit family or friends at 43 per cent and for commuting for work or volunteering at 42 per cent. Most usual journeys lasted between 21 and 30 minutes.

Barriers to bus travel were raised in feedback: 58 per cent of respondents cited concerns about cleanliness and 55 per cent pointed to overcrowding as factors that made them less likely to travel by bus.

Connectivity on the go

There was a strong demand for onboard charging facilities, with 80 per cent of respondents indicating they would like to be able to charge their electronic devices during a bus journey. At the time of the survey, 24 per cent of participants noted they did not currently use onboard charging facilities because they were broken or unavailable. In the closed questions, 52 per cent of respondents stated they would prefer either or both USB-A and USB-C ports, followed by 37 per cent who specifically preferred USB-C. In contrast, the responses in the qualitative feedback highlighted a specific preference for the introduction of USB-C charging ports to accommodate modern devices.

69 per cent of respondents would like to use 4G Wi-Fi on a bus journey, while only 20 per cent of respondents currently do so. Safety concerns were raised regarding data security when using onboard charging facilities and onboard Wi-Fi. VCFSE participants specifically noted a dislike for having to provide personal details to access Wi-Fi on every journey due to security concerns.

Staying comfortable

The temperature on the bus and the seating both play an important role in passenger comfort. 38 per cent of respondents stated that buses being "too hot or too cold" was a deterrent to travel. Respondents expressed a preference for a consistent temperature throughout the year, with most being satisfied with a standard room temperature of 16 to 21 degrees Celsius.

Additionally, seat comfort was a priority, as 41 per cent of respondents found current seats uncomfortable. 54 per cent of respondents preferred vinyl/synthetic leather seating material while 38 per cent preferred moquette. Feedback emphasised that seats should be easy to clean, stain-resistant, and hygienic. Wider engagement with VCFSE and accessibility groups echoed the preference for synthetic leather for hygiene reasons and suggested a need for more legroom and dedicated luggage space to keep floors clear.

Seating for those who need it most

There was broad support for preferential seating, though how comfortable people were in using preferential seating varied. While 35 per cent of all respondents agreed they would feel comfortable using preferential seating if they needed it, this was significantly higher among specific groups. Specifically, 64 per cent of those who used a mobility scooter, 58 per cent of wheelchair users, and 64 per cent of respondents who are currently pregnant or had been pregnant in the last 12 months strongly agreed they would feel comfortable using these seats.

However, in qualitative feedback on reserved seating more generally (i.e. including both preferential and priority seating), 11 per cent of respondents suggested a need to raise awareness that not all disabilities are visible, and 9 per cent expressed concern that people use reserved seating when they do not need it. To address these social barriers, 5 per cent of respondents suggested that the correct usage of reserved seats should be more clearly signposted.

Access to buses

Accessibility was a critical concern for many passengers, particularly those with limited mobility. 18 per cent of respondents noted that current buses lacked sufficient space for wheelchairs or mobility aids, a figure that rose to 74 per cent among those who used a wheelchair, mobility scooter, or wheeled walker. Similarly, 66 per cent of people with prams identified a lack of space for prams as a major issue.

When presented with specific designs, Layout C (which featured two wheelchair spaces and an additional accessible free space) was the preferred choice for 70 per cent of wheelchair users and 68 per cent of mobility scooter users. Respondents who would use a pram also showed strong preference for Layout C, with 61 per cent also ranking it first.

A campaign response signed by 137 individuals called for the introduction of two sets of doors on buses for more efficient boarding and alighting, alongside separate, dedicated spaces for both wheelchairs and buggies. The need for multiple doors was also mentioned in open question responses to the survey, and during VCFSE engagement. The campaign also emphasised the need for electric boarding ramps with manual backups and the placement of bell buttons within easy reach of accessible seating. Whilst feedback from accessibility groups also identified the need for eye-level destination displays specifically for wheelchair users, and ongoing ramp maintenance to ensure sensor reliability.

Flooring

Safety and hygiene were the primary themes regarding bus flooring. Among those who provided further comments, 14 per cent suggested the use of non-slip flooring and a further 14 per cent expressed concerns that currently floors become slippery when wet. Additionally, 10 per cent of respondents requested flooring that was easy to keep clean.

Some participants suggested wood-effect flooring to improve the visual appeal of the bus interior, while others emphasised the need for dementia-friendly designs.

Audio visual announcements and appearance of buses

Access to information was vital for a confident passenger experience, as 22 per cent of respondents worried about not knowing where to get off the bus. While there was support for reliable audio-visual announcements, respondents also emphasised that screens must be visible to all, including wheelchair users who often face away from the screens at the moment due to the positioning of wheelchairs on buses.

Regarding the exterior of the bus, respondents with disabilities placed high importance on large, easy-to-read text. 78 per cent of those whose activities were limited 'a lot' and 77 per cent of those whose activities are limited 'a little' placed high importance on this feature.

With regards to the creative design of the interior of buses, 13 per cent of respondents who left a comment in the open question about creative features supported designs that showcased West Yorkshire landmarks and attractions to highlight local pride and identity. 12 per cent suggested creative designs from local artists/poets, and 10 per cent suggested creative design to highlight the history of West Yorkshire.

Equity diversity and inclusion

We also asked optional 'about you' questions, where we asked you to tell us more about yourself so we could understand more about who responded to our questionnaire. From our 'About You' questions, we learnt the demographics of our respondents:

- 56 per cent were female/women, 38 per cent were male/men, and 5 per cent preferred not to say
- 38 per cent are 16-24 years old, 19 per cent are 25-34, 12 per cent are 35-44, 8 per cent are 45-54 years, a further 8 per cent are 55-64, 6 per cent are 65-74 years old
- 78 per cent are 'White or White British', 10% are 'Asian, Asian British', and 6 per cent are 'Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African'
- 53 per cent indicated they did not follow a religion, 29 per cent selected 'Christian' and 8 per cent selected 'Muslim'
- 31 per cent said they do have a long term health condition
- 3 per cent were currently pregnant or had been pregnant in the last 12 months
- 69 per cent are heterosexual/straight
- 55 per cent are from the Leeds local authority area

The project team carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). This is a review of the impacts that the project may have on people who identify with any of the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Those protected characteristics that were found to be most impacted by the project were age, disability and pregnancy/maternity. This was considered in our analysis and responses to the questionnaire were cross tabulated against these characteristics to understand any specific patterns.

Next steps

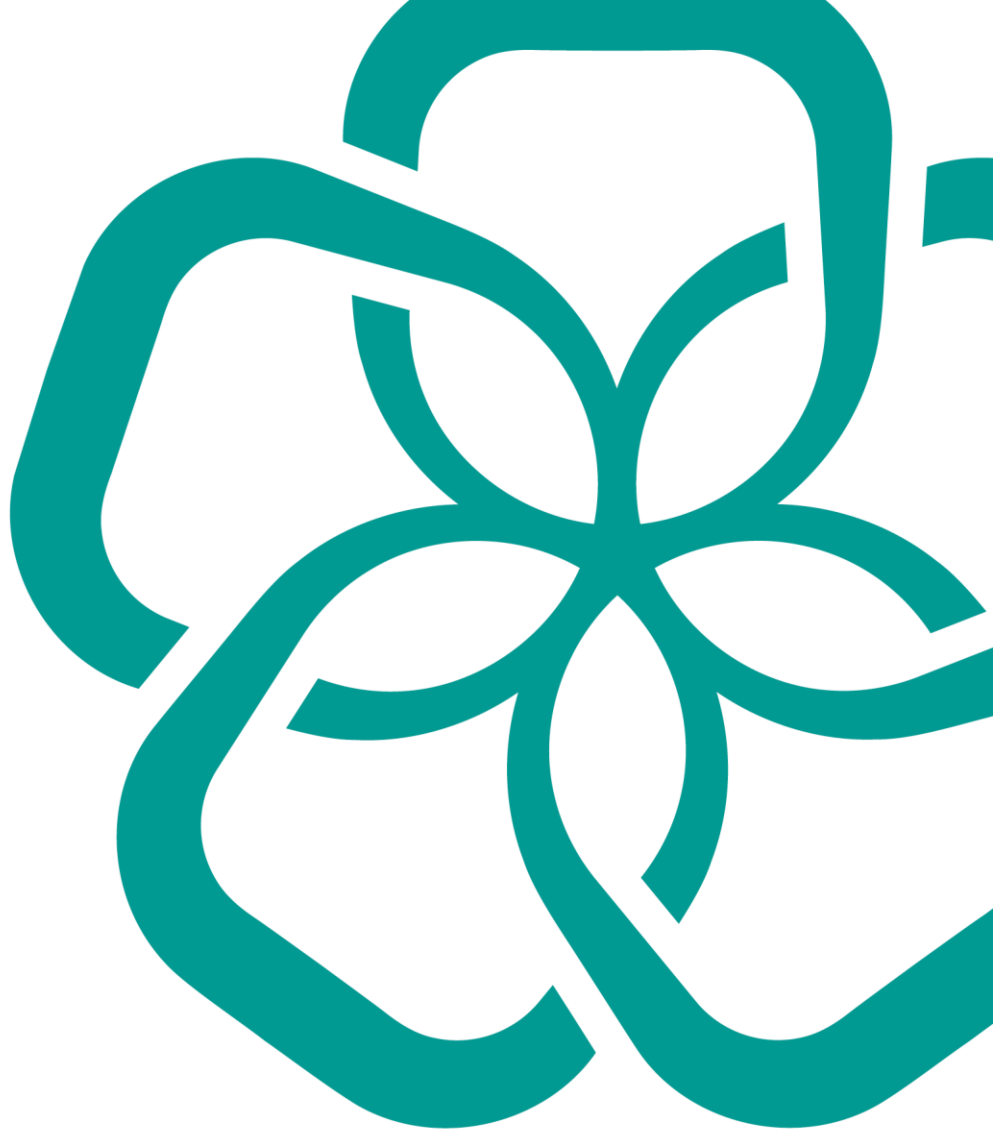
Analysis of feedback received from all sources, together with the outcome report, will be reviewed and considered by the project team to support decision-making on the final bus designs.

The first franchised buses are proposed to be on the road from April 2027.



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All information correct at time of writing