

Bus Back Better: Stakeholder Update

Somerset County Council Workshop

September 2021



Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to attend this stakeholder engagement session.

Ahead of the session please can we highlight the following:

- > Please can everyone remain on mute and with cameras off during the presentation, this helps those that may not have a strong connection;
- > The aim of the session is to update you on our **Bus Back Better** work;
- > We are happy to take immediate clarification questions and reactions once this presentation has finished;
- > To raise a question or comment please use the 'raise hand' symbol in the toolbar at the top of the screen;
- > As there are a large number of attendees, we would encourage you to listen to the presentation and then consider your formal / detailed feedback after the session is over and submit this to us using the feedback form that we will send out to you; and,
- > This will not be the only opportunity for you to provide feedback.



Welcome

We propose to record the session in order to capture any initial feedback and also to enable this link to be provided to those who were unable to attend.

If you do not wish to be recorded please let us know now and you can opt out of the presentation. We can then send you the recording and the feedback form to enable you to still take part.

Any comments or feedback that is recorded will be presented in an anonymised form in any reporting.

Later in the session we will be asking you to answer some questions using Mentimeter. You will need a different window, or browser on your computer or phone, to take part.

The address is **www.menti.com**. It will ask for a code, which will be on the top of the first slide with questions. You only need to enter the code once. We will have a practice run during the presentation before the main questions.



What is the National Bus Strategy

On Monday 15 March 2021 Government launched Bus Back Better, a new national bus strategy for England with aims to rejuvenate local bus services by making them:

- > **More attractive for passengers**
- > **More affordable**
- > **Easier to understand and use**
- > **Faster and more reliable**
- > **Greener**



It acknowledges the decades-long national decline in bus patronage and points to places which have bucked this trend.

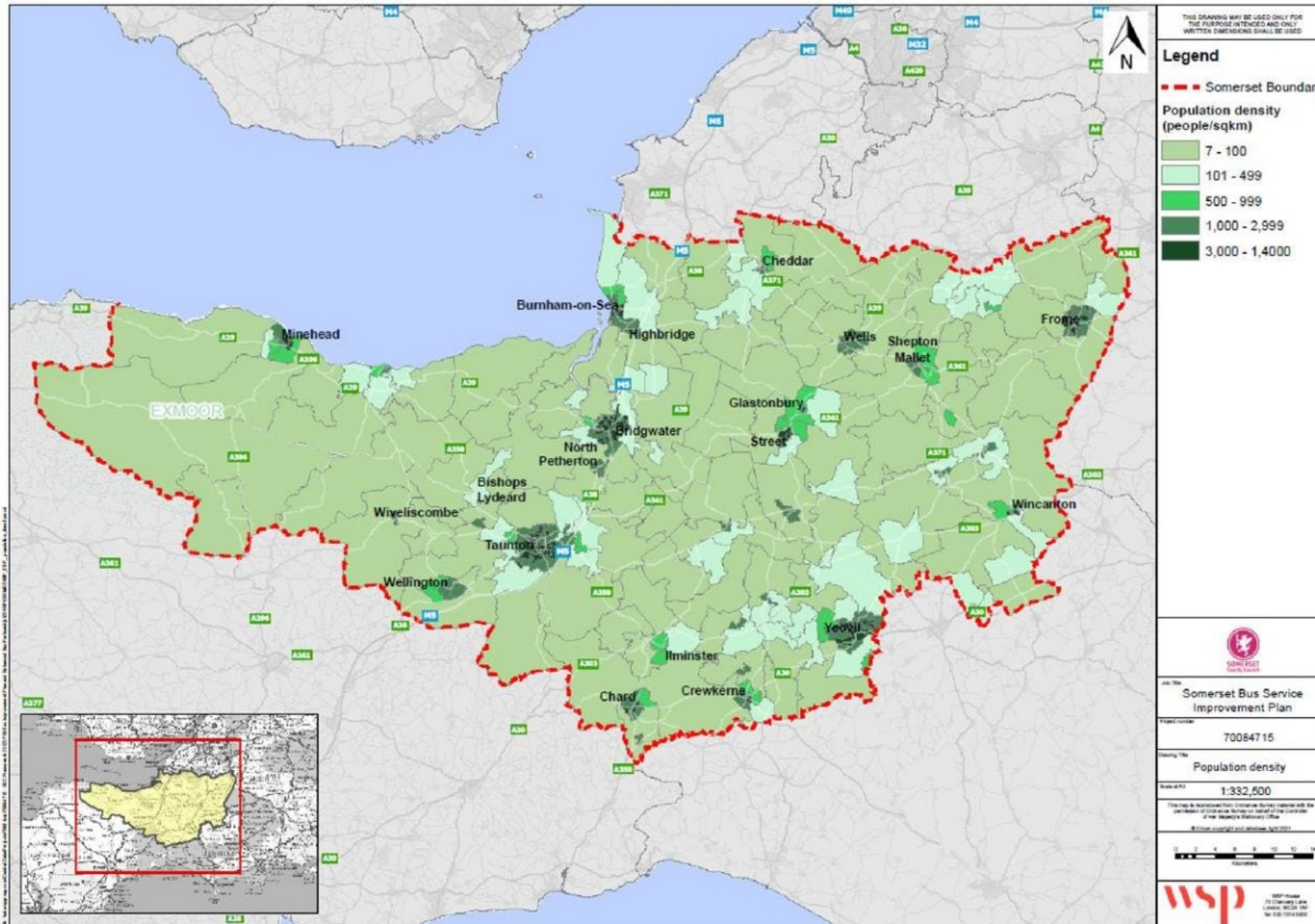
It requires each authority to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to coordinate services and future investment through an Enhanced Partnership (EP) approach.

Work Underway

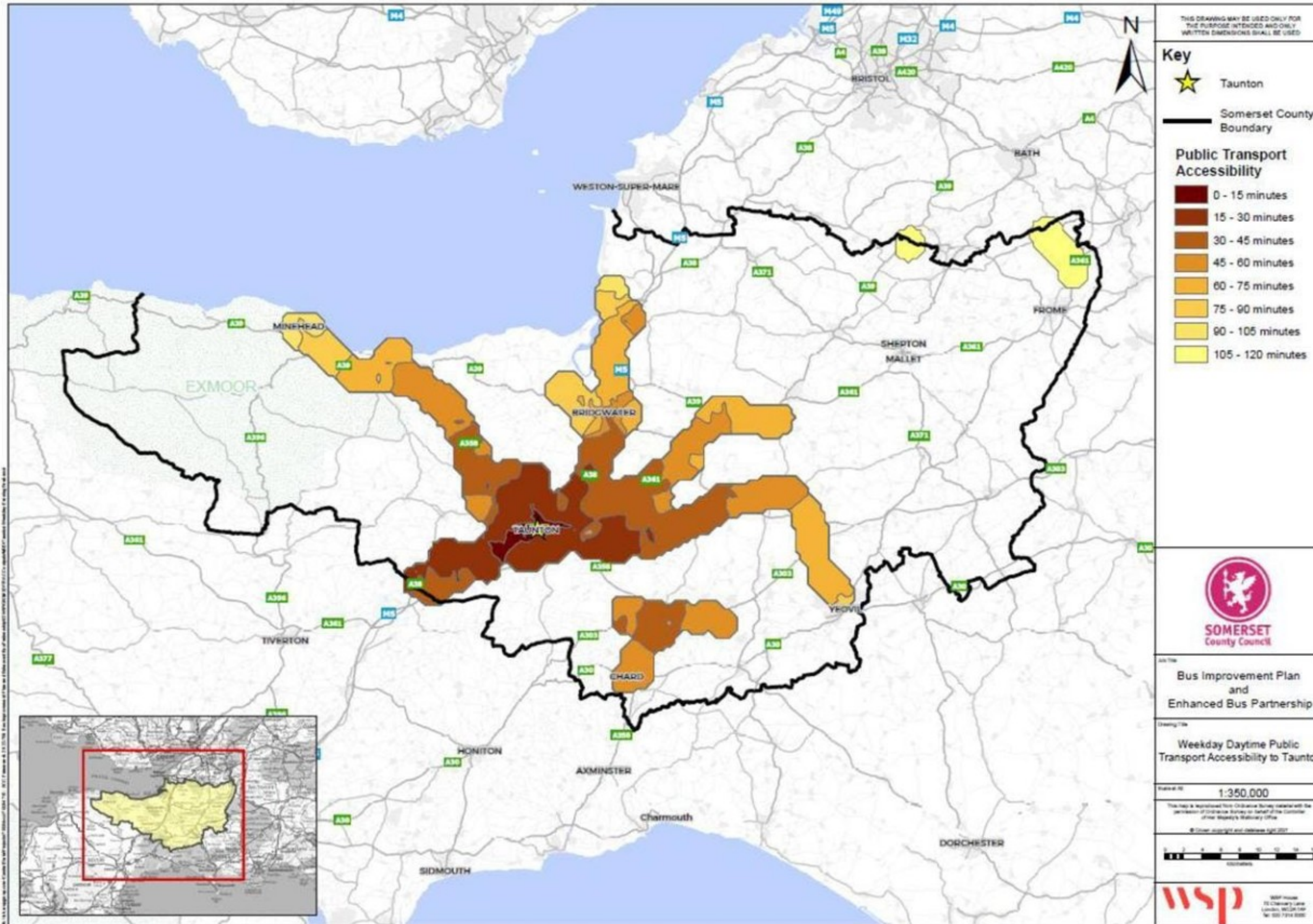
- > Following our earlier presentation to you we have been gathering data and working on the following areas:
 - National Policy Context
 - Local Policy Review and Context
 - Mapping population demographic data
 - Producing accessibility heat maps
 - Understanding the propensity to use public transport
 - Generating current bus network frequency maps
 - Gathering local bus operator data
 - Collating and analysing public and stakeholder feedback
 - Liaising with DfT on their expectations for the BSIP

- > This session will focus on providing a flavour of the data we are analysing and will present the findings of the public and stakeholder feedback.

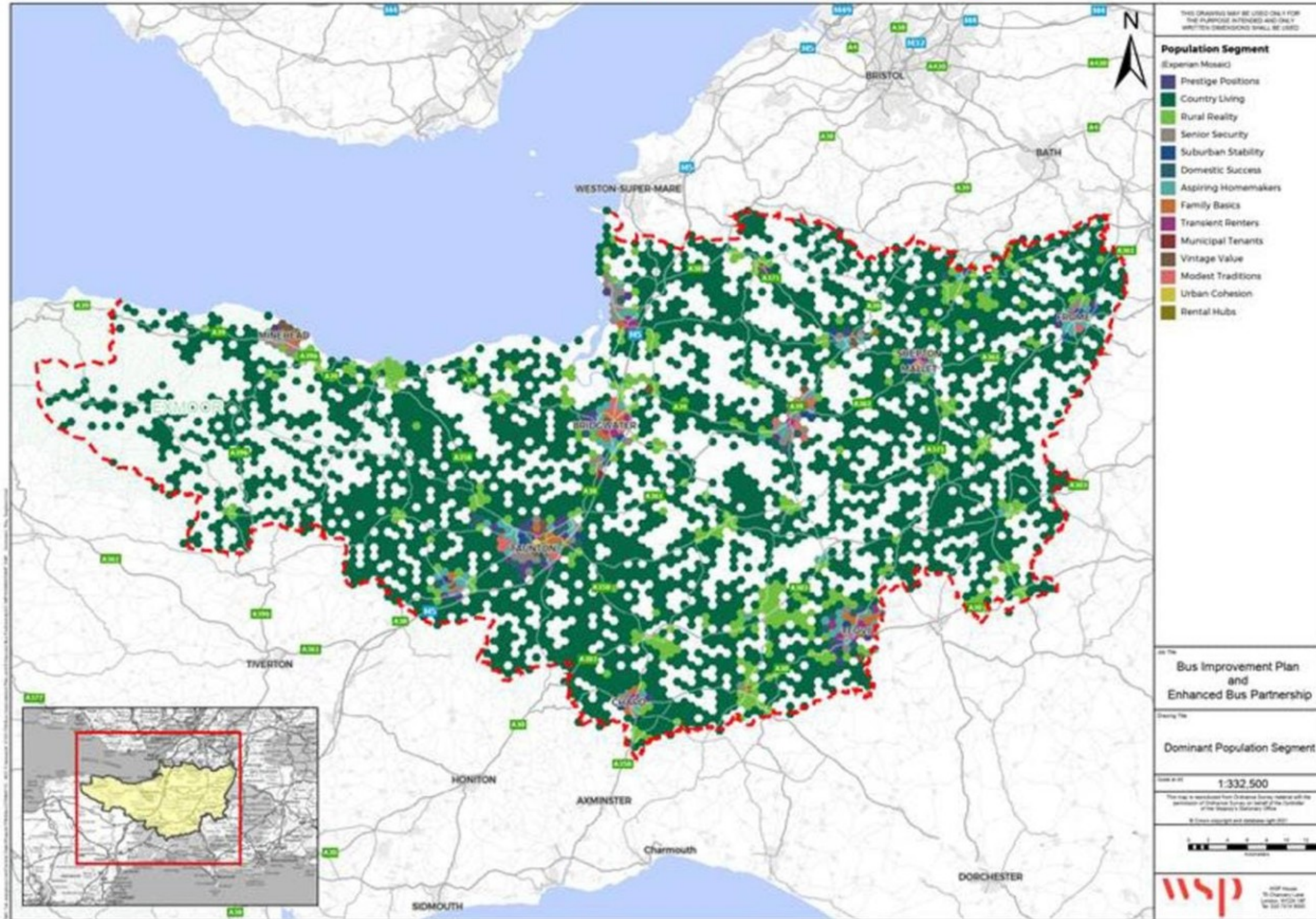
Population Demographics



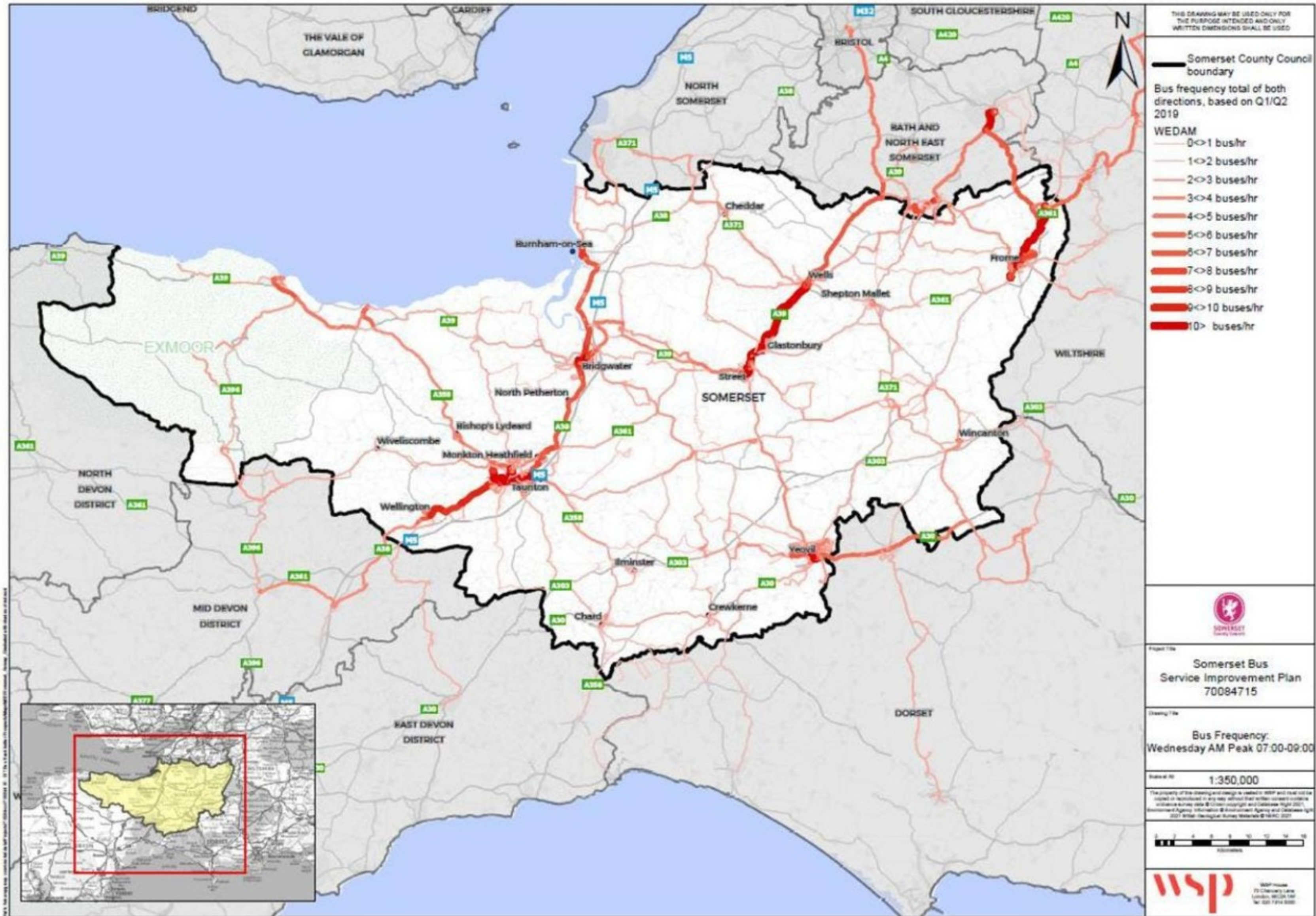
Accessibility Mapping



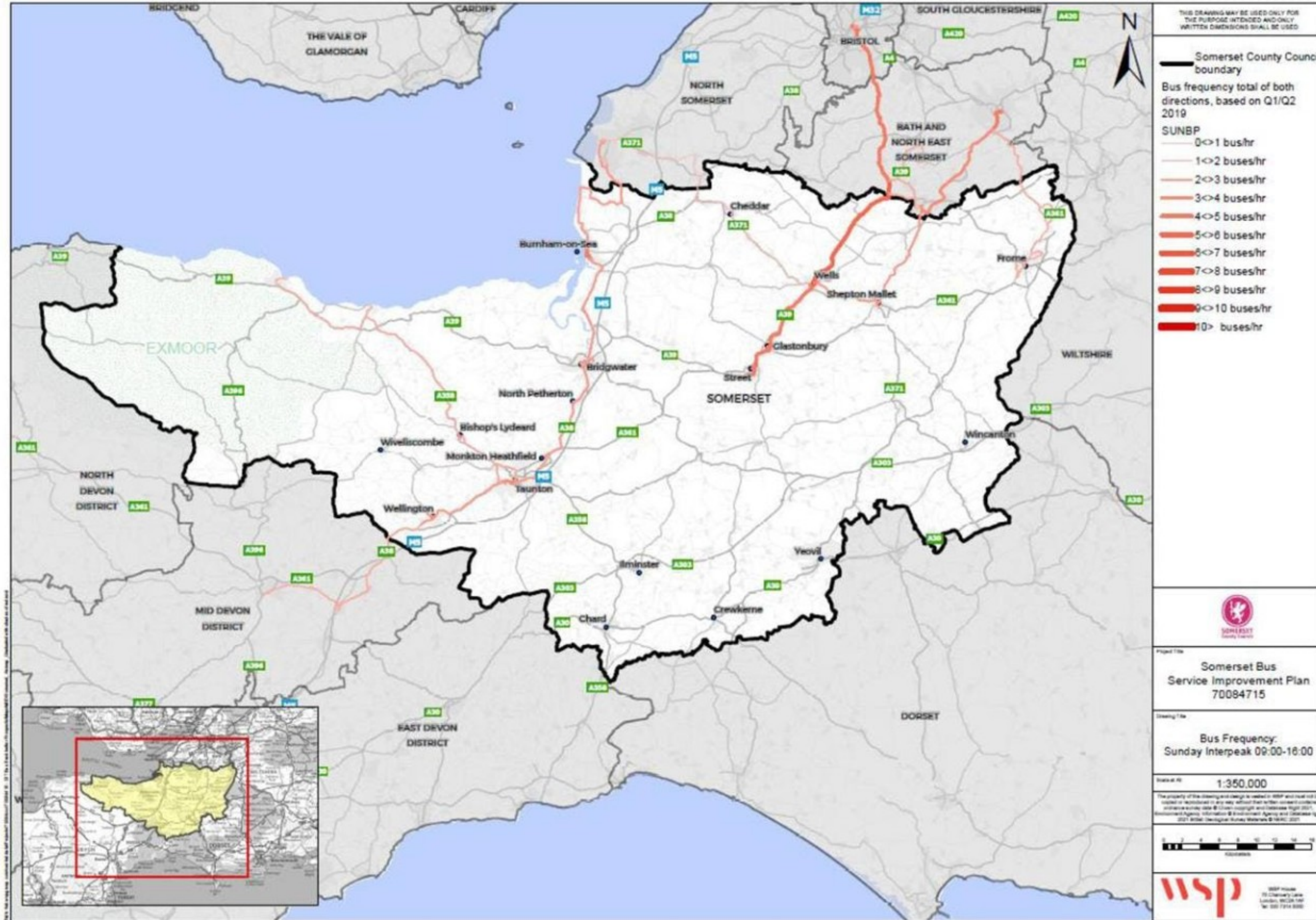
Persona Propensity Mapping



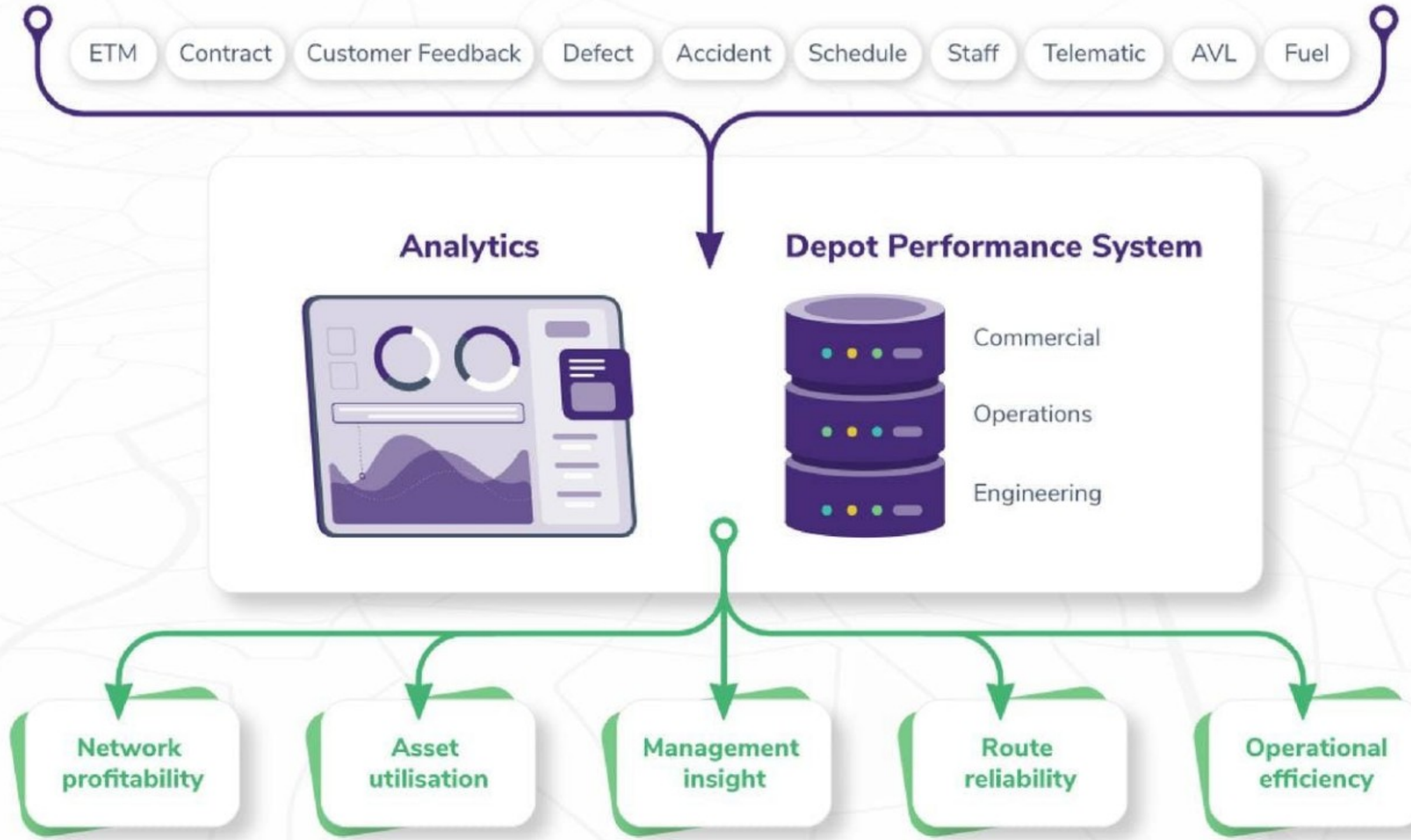
Bus Service Frequency Mapping



Bus Service Frequency Mapping



Bus Operator Data



Public and Stakeholder Feedback

- > As part of our preparation for the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) we have been gathering primary data:
 - Online snap survey for the general public
 - Detailed feedback from stakeholders
- > The results shown for the public online survey are shown in full with the survey closing on the 15th August 2021.
- > Additionally we have held detailed meetings with local bus operators, rail and coach service providers, community transport groups, and youth forums in Somerset.
- > We will shortly present our findings before proposing a series of questions to you in an interactive way using Mentimeter to help us dig a little deeper into each area.

Public Survey - Base Analysis

- > The public online survey attracted **over 1,500** responses with 98% of respondents resident in Somerset.
- > **51%** of respondents were under 65 years of age.
- > **38%** of respondents never/rarely used buses. **34%** were frequent users.
- > Only **8%** of respondents were satisfied with bus services.
- > Three main issues prevent increased use of bus:
 - Buses not going to places people want them to go (41%)
 - No buses running where people lived / worked (37%)
 - The cost of fares (20%)

Public Survey - Base Analysis

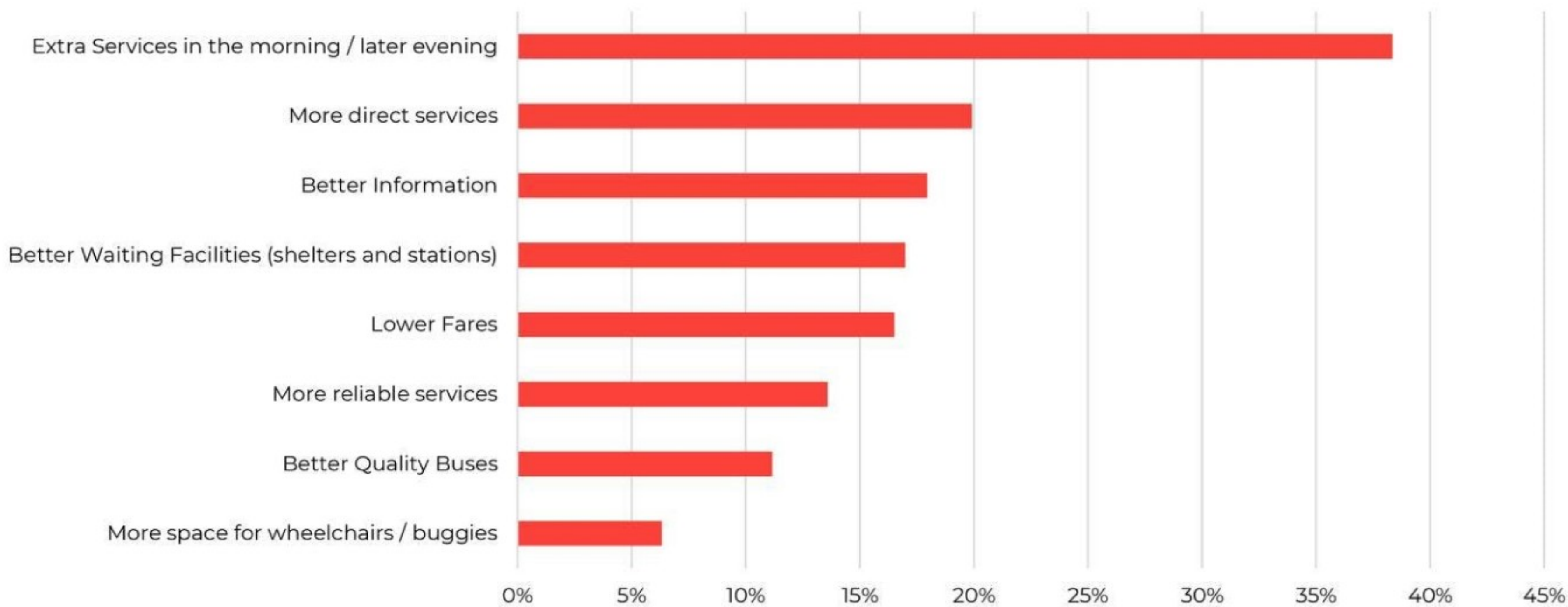
- > The top three things that would make people use the bus more:
 - Earlier morning / later evening buses (inc. weekends) (40%)
 - More direct services (21%)
 - Better information (15%)

- > The top five improvements people asked for through the BSIP process were:
 - Real-Time bus tracking / information (35%)
 - Better Bus/Rail integration (33%)
 - A single ticket to use across all buses (25%)
 - Easy to read / clearer timetables (24%)
 - Cleaner, greener buses (23%)

Feedback Results

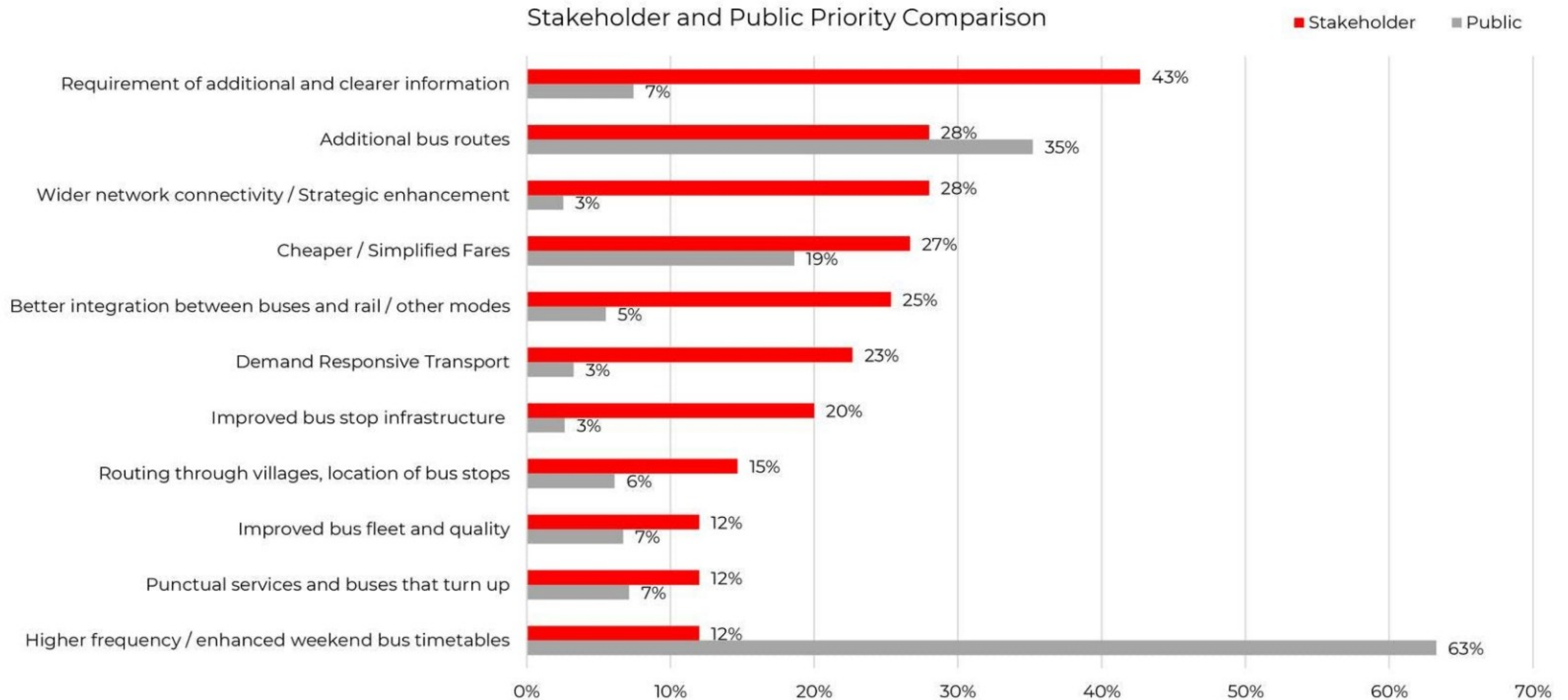
> The graph below shows ranked public opinion from **high** to **low** on what would make them use local buses more.

Website Responses - Aspects to Encourage More Bus Use



Feedback Results

> The graph compares to public opinion to ranked priorities that stakeholders have stated as important - from **high** to **low**.



Feedback Results - Notes

- > The feedback provided by stakeholders and the public was unguided 'free-text'.
- > All feedback was read and coded into priority categories by our team with some feedback falling into multiple priority areas.
- > We received 75 written priority comments from formal stakeholders (using the supplied feedback form) and 983 written priority comments from the general public
- > We received responses across a range of media from email, social media, written / postal, and online survey.
- > Over 1,000 written responses have been received and analysed from all consultees.

Stakeholder Feedback Priorities

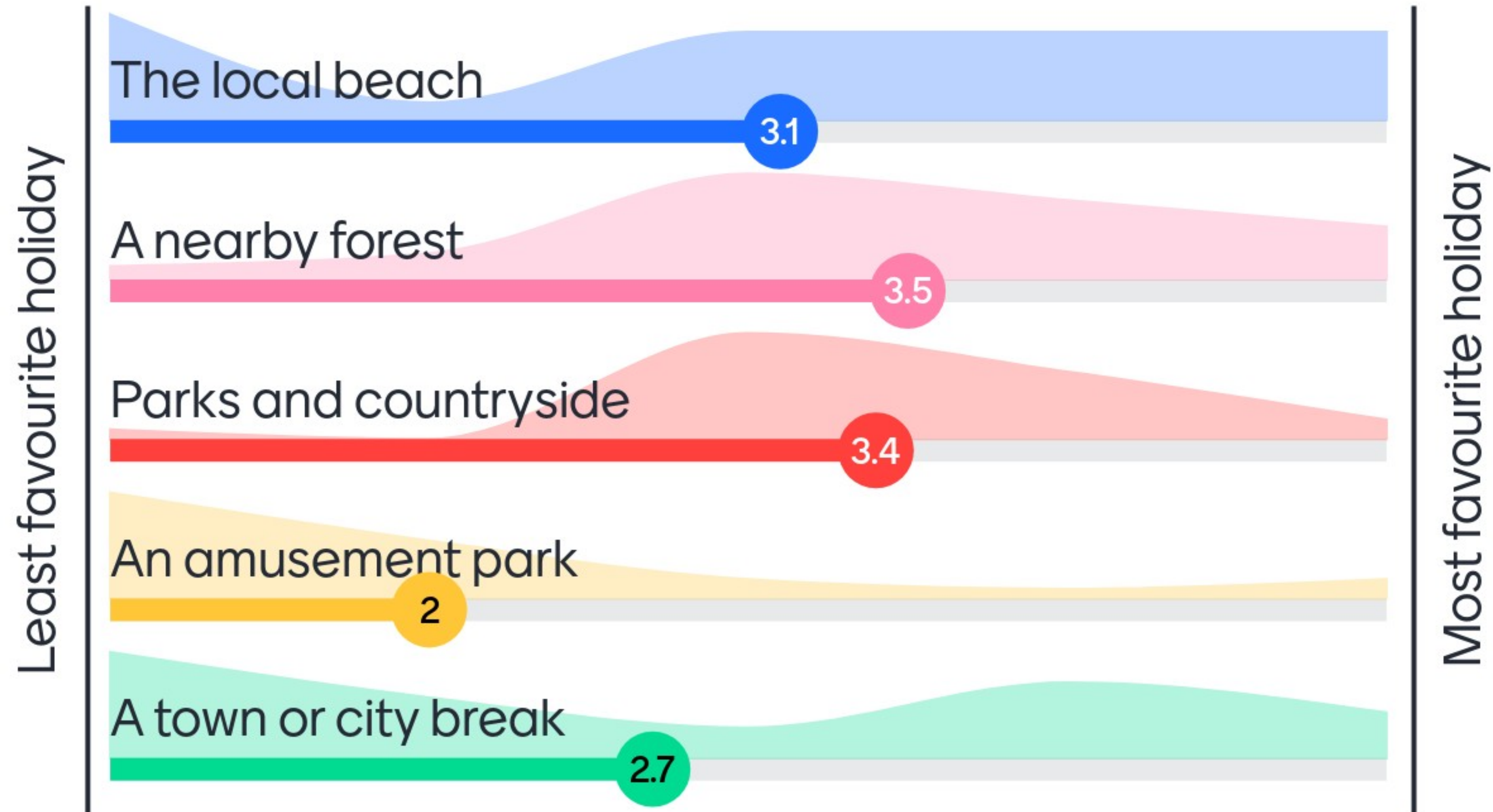
- > The top five priorities for stakeholders formally asked to provide feedback were:
 1. Additional and clearer bus service information;
 2. Additional bus routes;
 3. Wider network connectivity / Strategic enhancement;
 4. Better integration with rail and other modes; and
 5. Cheaper and simplified fares.

- > These differed from the public's top three priorities:
 - 1 – Higher frequencies / enhanced weekend timetables
 - 2 – Additional bus routes
 - 3 – Cheaper and simplified fares

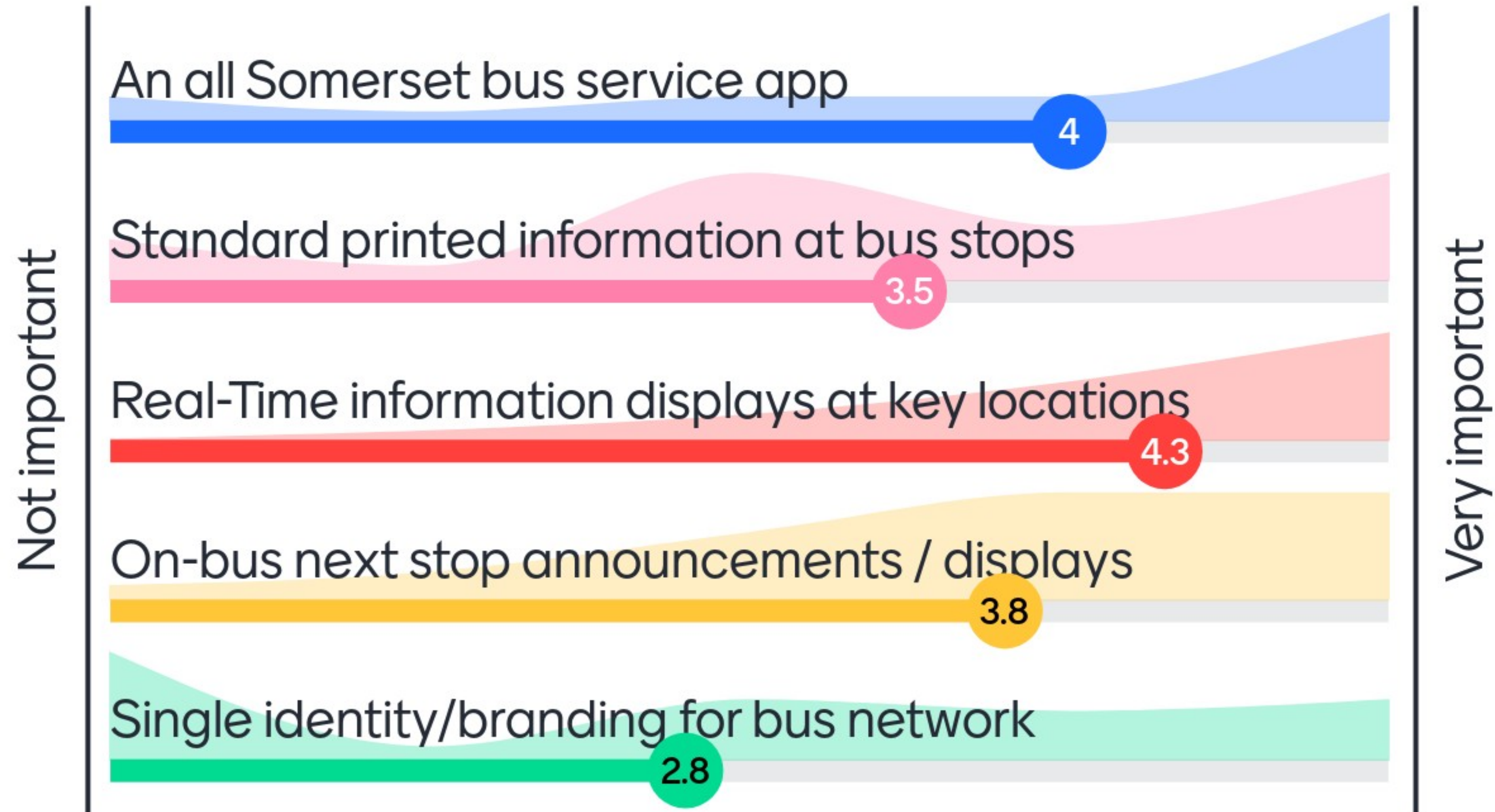
Summary Feedback Context

- > Common themes drawn from the detailed feedback were:
 - Fares -lots of different tickets between operators and expensive fares for the quality and amount of service provided.
 - A lack of services - poor connections between communities and to facilities (shopping and hospital) and, timetables that do not make journeys easy / possible.
 - Interchange - with rail and related to timetables not matching up, or existing routes not providing good interchange potential.
 - Information - for ticketing and available services this is seen as below standard and often out of date.
 - Suggestions that a review of the concessionary travel scheme to help maintain unprofitable routes should be raised nationally.
 - People recognise that issues are not cheap to remedy and note the positive environmental / societal importance of bus

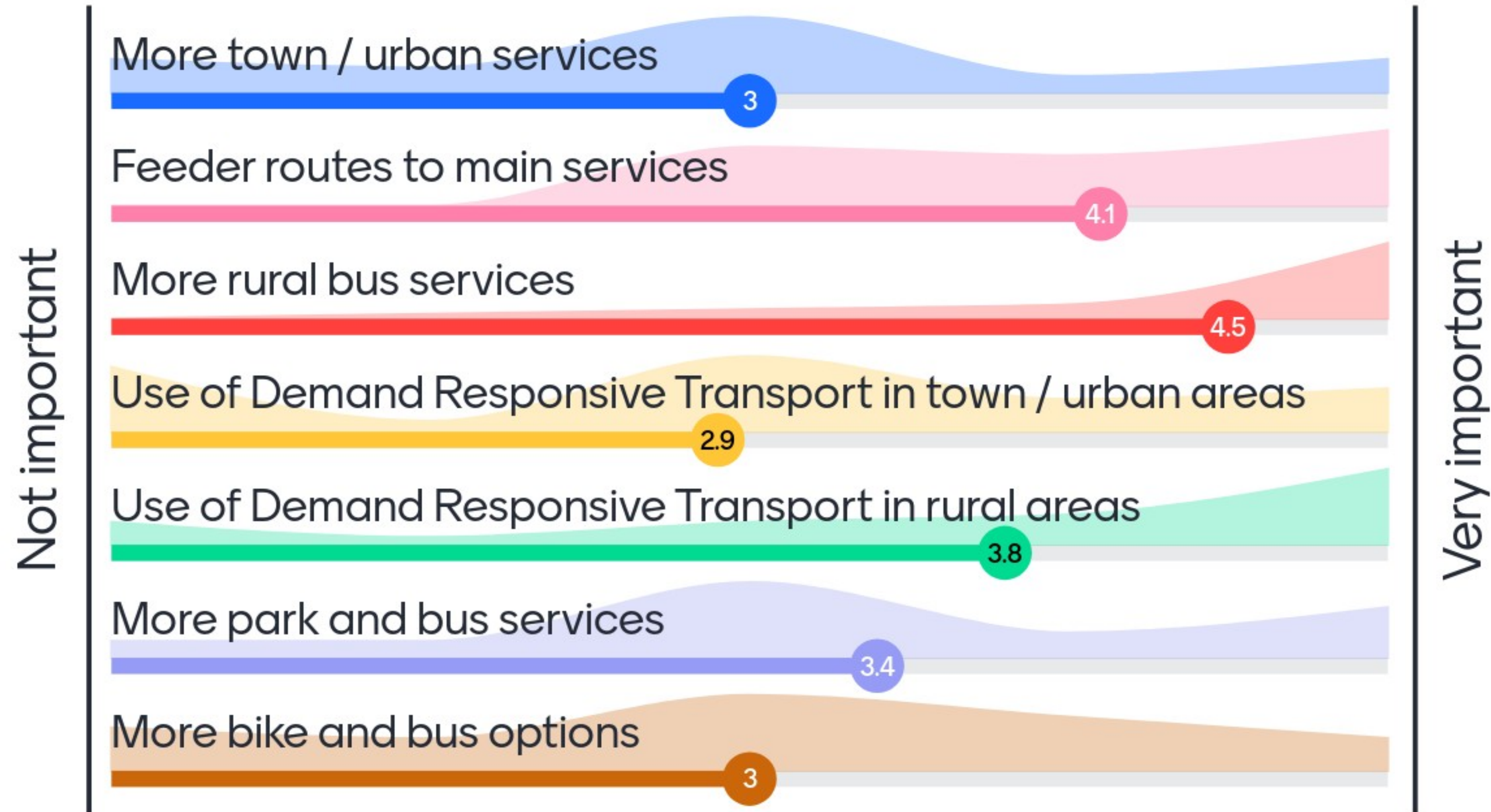
Test question: What is your opinion of summer holiday days out? Rank EACH option 1-5.



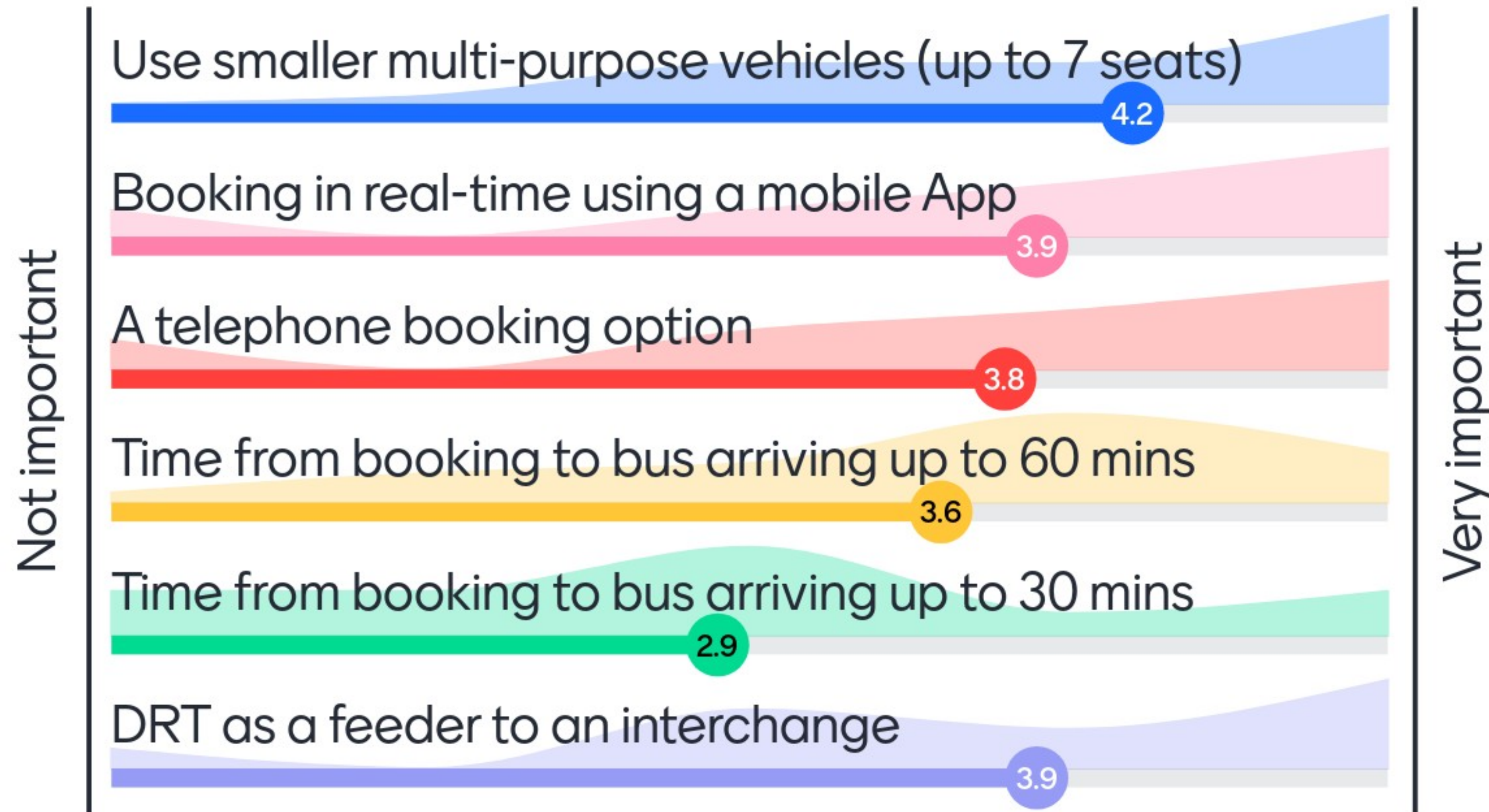
Additional and clearer bus service information: How important do you think these different aspects are?



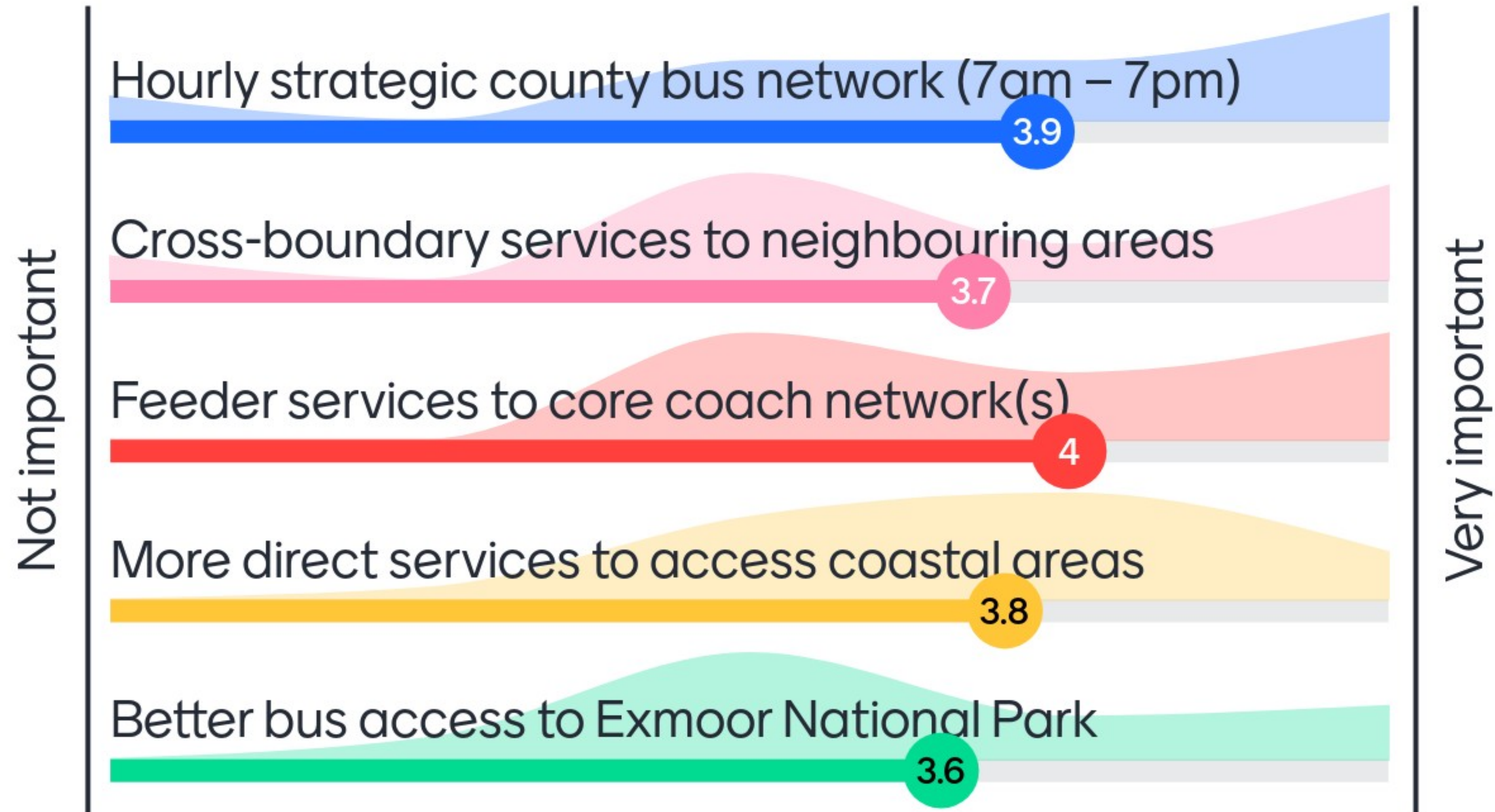
Additional bus routes: How important do you think these different aspects are?



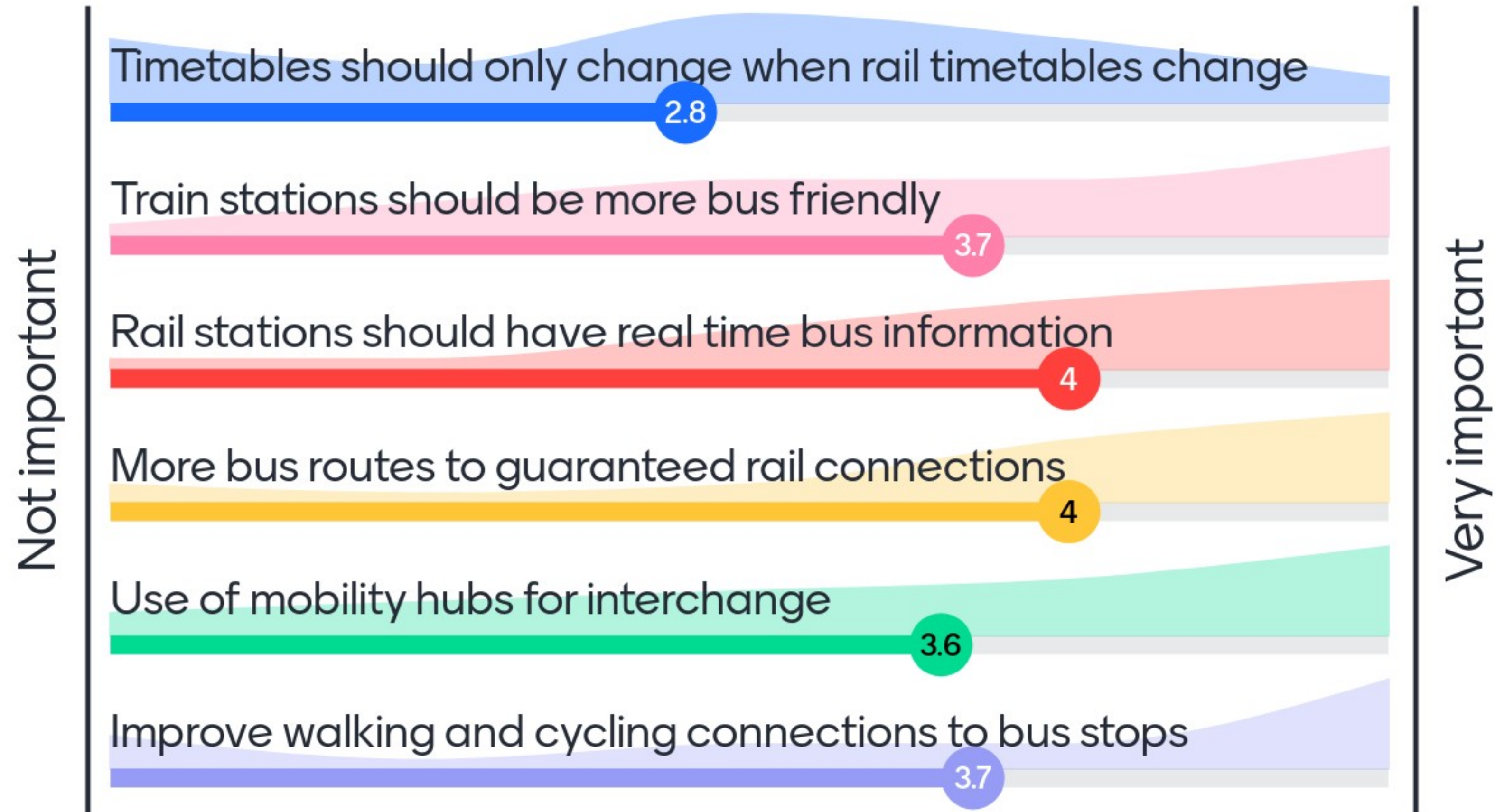
Use of Rural DRT: How important do you think these different aspects are?



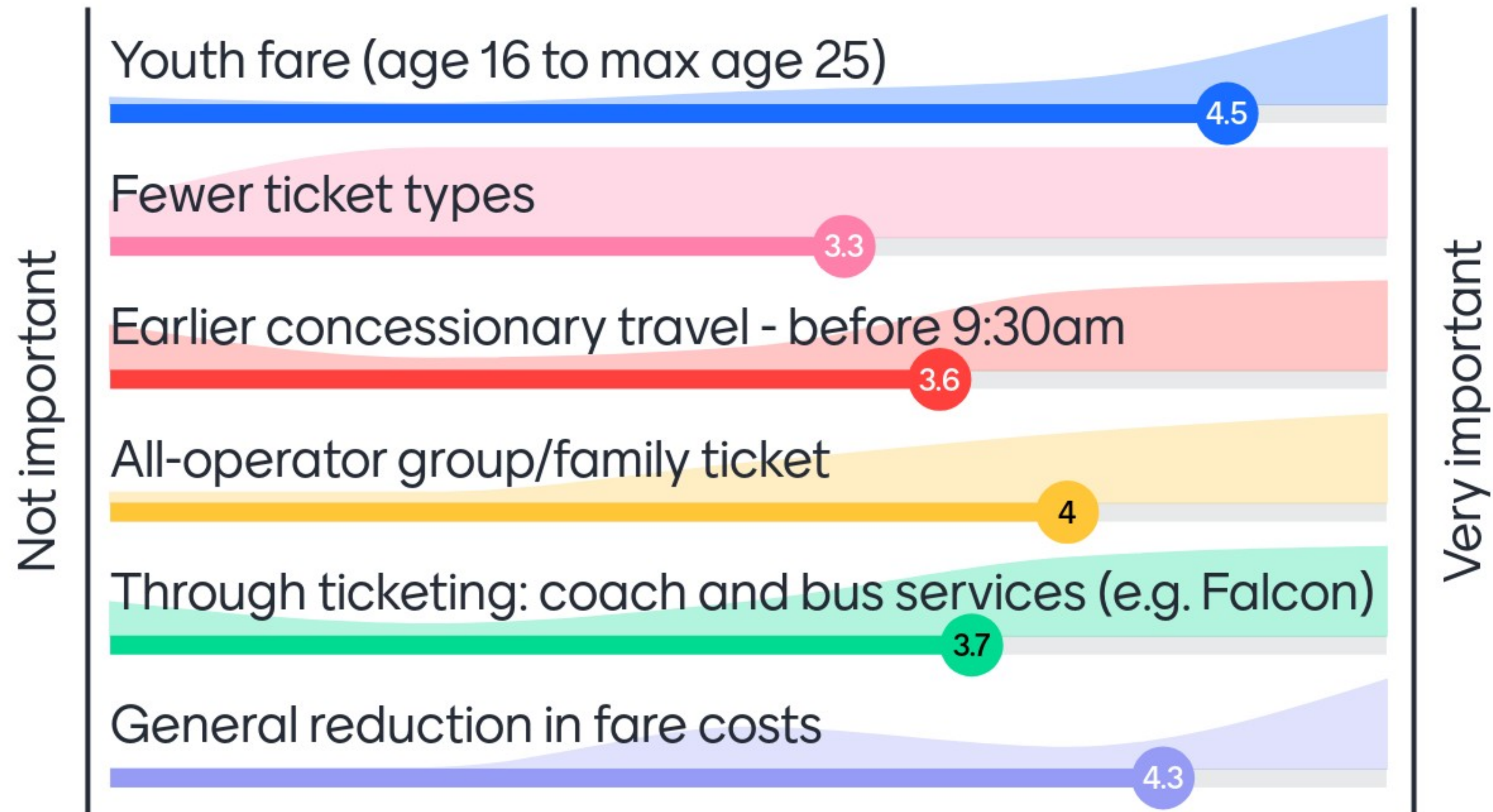
Wider network connectivity / Strategic enhancements: How important do you think these different aspects are?



Better integration between buses, rail and other modes: How important do you think these different aspects are?



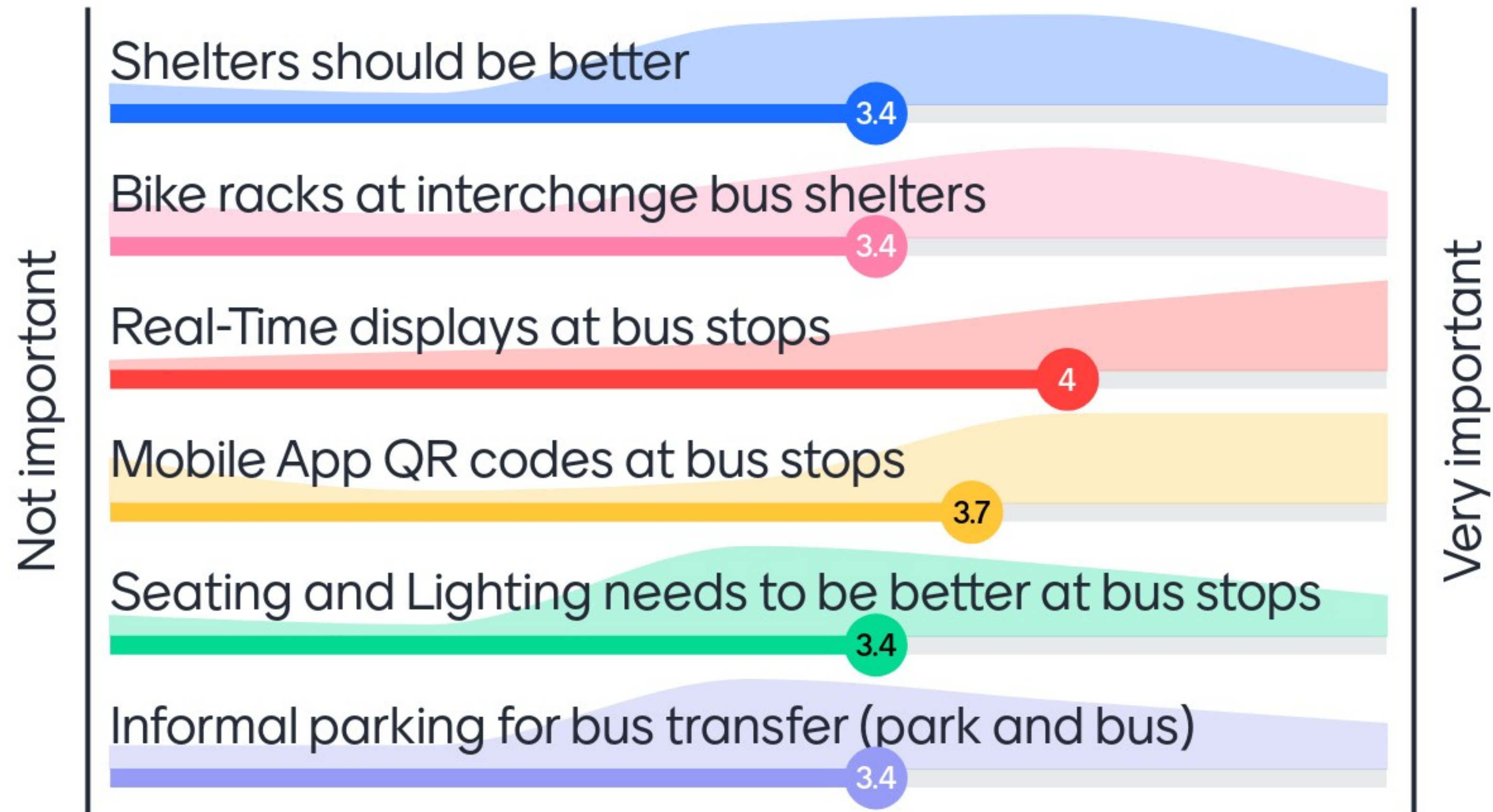
Cheaper / Simplified fare structure: How important do you think these different aspects are?



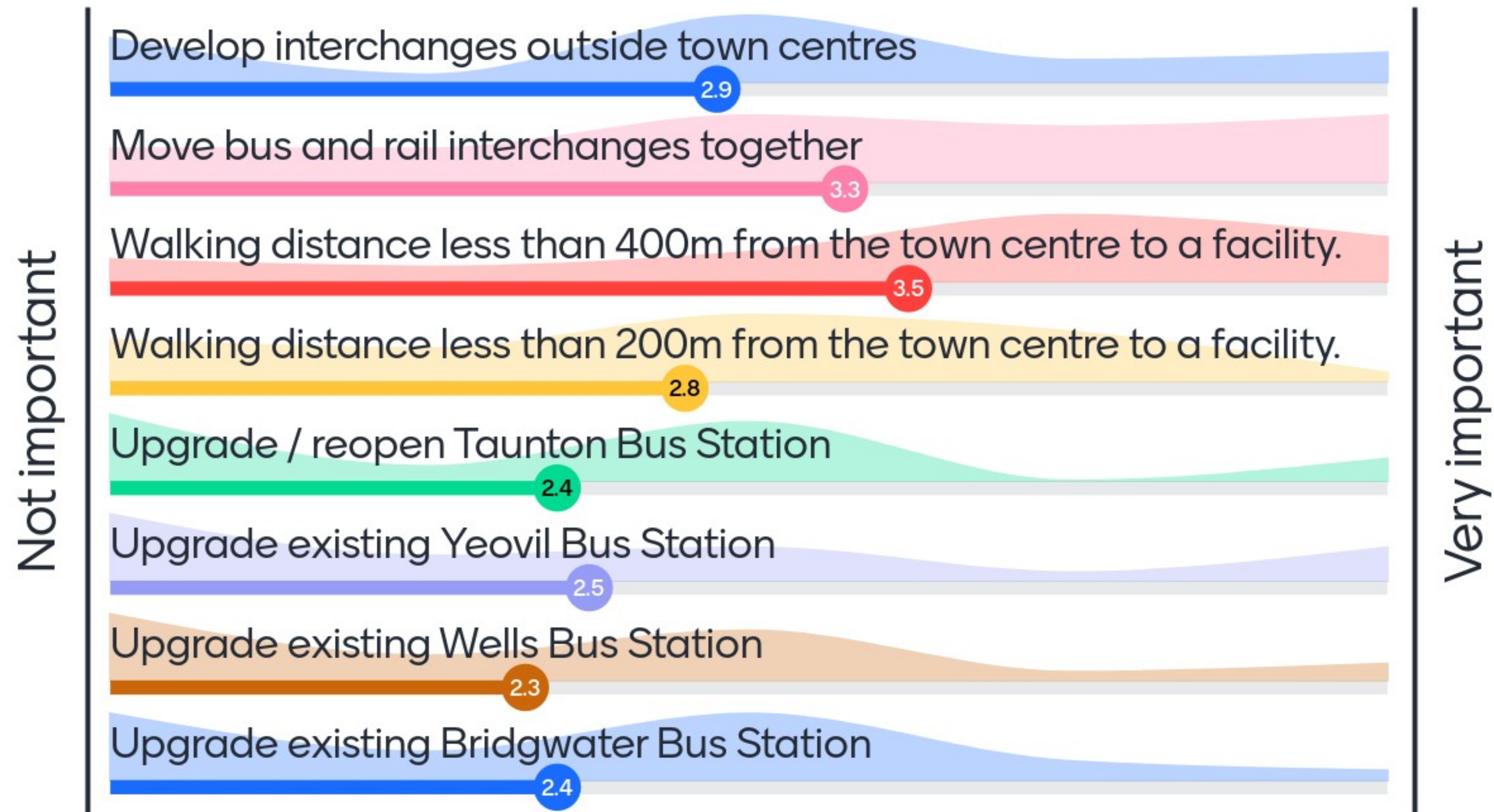
Higher frequency / enhanced weekend bus timetables: How important do you think these different aspects are?



Additional Priorities 1: How important do you think these different aspects are?



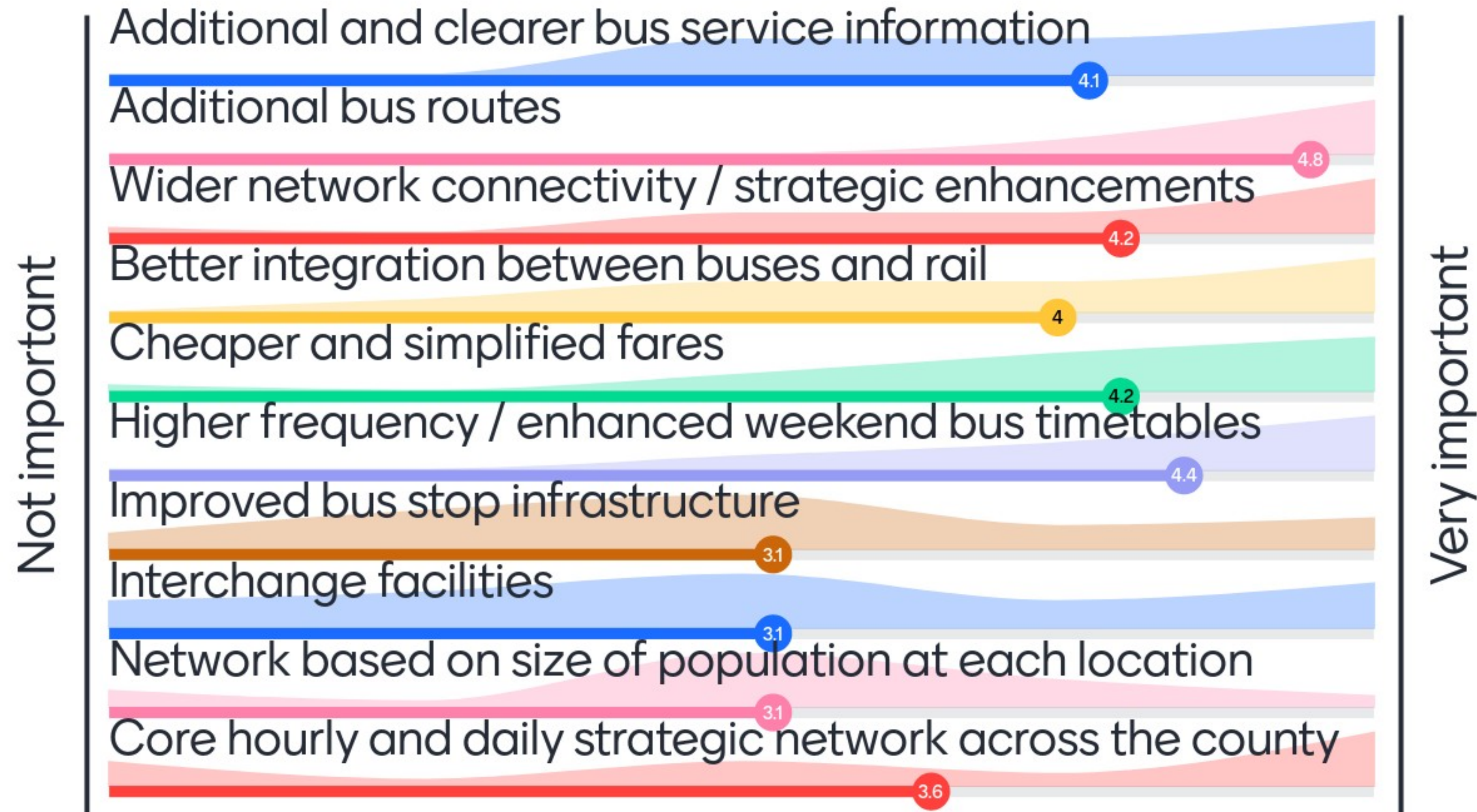
Additional Priorities 2: How important do you think these different aspects are?



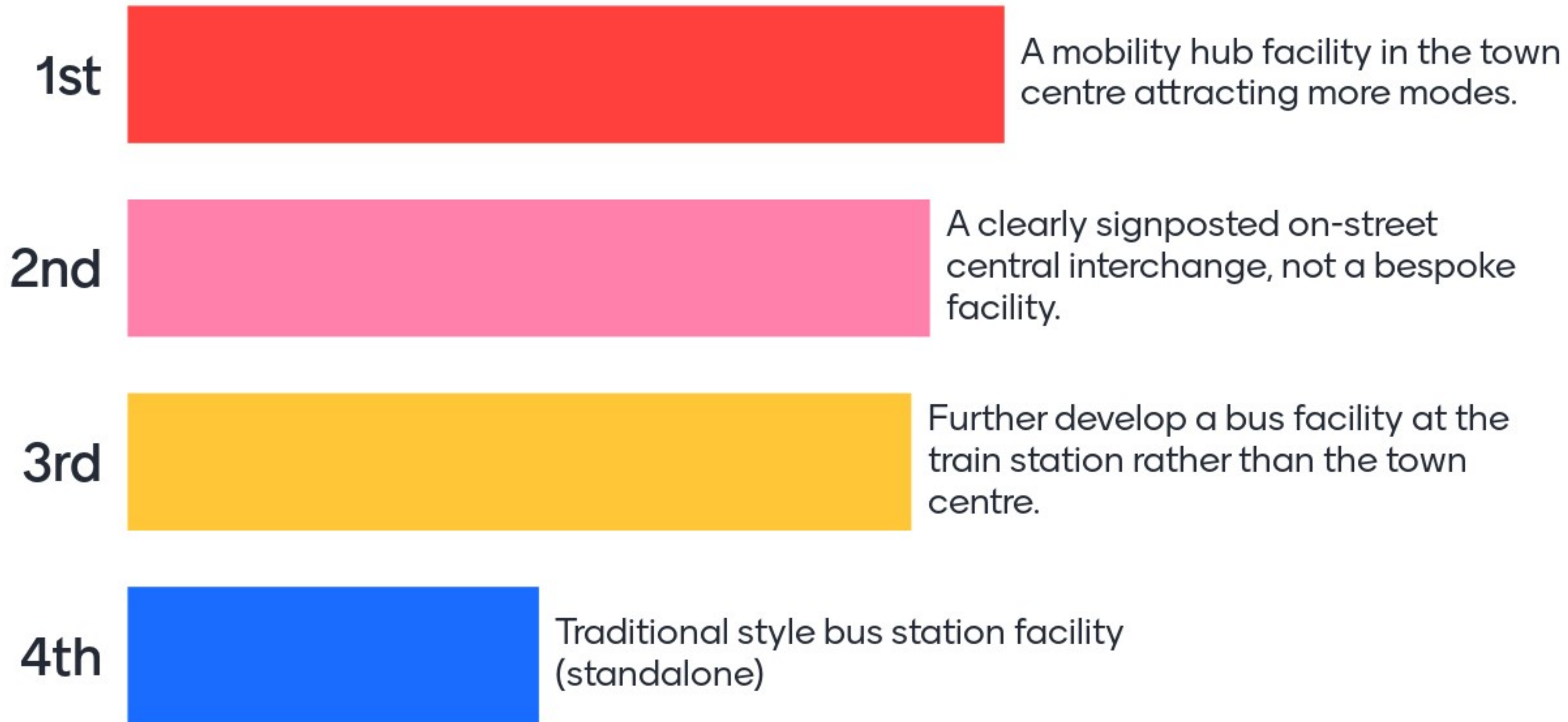
Additional Priorities 3: How important do you think these different aspects are?



The original priorities and the newer considerations: How important do you think each priority is?



Taunton Bus Station: Please rank the possible locations of a bus station for Taunton



What topics/questions would you like this audience to explore?

rural reactive service using a range of size of clean energy vehicle types should be encouraged even more.

County boundaries are not 'hard'. What are you doing with neighbouring counties to integrate implemented solutions?

In frequent bus return service, say one or two days a week, to rural villages

More regular services (at least hourly) to more locations and cheaper seem top priorities, but there are more. As many regular services as possible in rural areas.

Somerset is a key holiday area. Consider the demands of tourists and the tourist industry.

Ddrt digital demand responsive transport is key part of the solution.

More Free services like Taunton Park and Ride which has quadrupled passenger numbers

Please further explore options of small 7 seater buses (electric?) running with great frequency - say every 10 minutes, going directly into Taunton, ie lots of direct routes from surrounding suburbs like Monkton Heathfield.

Integration between bus services, P&Rs, active modes and other modes. Integration from a physical locational perspective (mobility hubs) but also ticketing.

What topics/questions would you like this audience to explore?

Non-bus users might use buses if they were available at convenient times? Default car use, but if there was a bus, cheaper than a couple of hours in a car park, and not so circuitous they might convert. Can't work a full time job here w/out a car

Next Steps

- > Following this stakeholder update we will carry forward the identified priorities into the formal BSIP document.
- > A first draft BSIP will be prepared by the 22nd September for review by Somerset County Council (SCC).
- > This will then be refined through a series of iterations that work with the SCC Cabinet Scrutiny and Approval process.
- > Also, in late September we will begin work on the Enhanced Partnership (EP) process. This requires public consultation.
- > As part of the public consultation for the EP we will report back on the final BSIP content and take on-board further feedback that will help us fine-tune the BSIP and shape its interaction with the EP.
- > The BSIP will be submitted to the DfT in October 2021 and the EP requires agreement and completion by April 2022.



Thank you for your time

Your contact is

Transport@somerset.gov.uk

Scales



