

PORTFOLIO HOLDER – HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORT

DATE	10 th February 2026
REPORT OF	Clr Stewart Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Carolina Borgstrom, Director for Economy, Environment & Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Progress Report
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	PHHIT 02/26/01

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme (EP) contributes towards key Council priorities by improving public transport within the borough, providing access to work, training, education, and social opportunities, and creating affordable transport services, which, in turn enables a 'Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities, Greener Future & Effective and Enabling Council'. The BSIP is also expected to enable improved safety and sustainability and contribute towards actions identified in the Councils Carbon Roadmap strategy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update in relation to the work of the EP and BSIP in North East Lincolnshire (NEL).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport;

- A) Notes the report and receives a further BSIP and EP progress report by 31 March 2027, in line with the Department for Transport (DfT) and EP requirements.
- B) Provides approval for this progress report to be published on North East Lincolnshire Council's website.
- C) Approves the proposed 2026/2027 BSIP delivery programme included in Appendix A (subject to funding).

REASONS FOR DECISION

This report provides an annual progress report which is a requirement of the DfT and the Council's EP Plan.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Government's 2021 National Bus Strategy for England offered an opportunity for step changes in local bus services in North East Lincolnshire. Initially, the Council was awarded £4.7 million of BSIP funding through a successful funding bid to the DfT National Bus Strategy. At the time of writing this report, the Council has received over £9 million of BSIP Capital and Revenue funding since the 2023/24 financial year.
- 1.2 On the 10 February 2025, the Portfolio Holder considered a BSIP and EP progress report and approved for a further update to be provided in 2026.
- 1.3 The Council has made good progress in the delivery of the 2025/2026 delivery programme. A timeline of progress to date, following the February 2025 progress report, can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.4 To monitor passenger satisfaction and to monitor the impact of the BSIP schemes, the Council commissioned Transport Focus to conduct passenger satisfaction surveys. Results from the satisfaction survey (covering the period February 2025 to November 2025), are shown in the table below (see appendix C for more information):

Item	2023 Results – NEL	2024 Results – NEL	2024 Average for England	2025 NEL Results to date
Overall Satisfaction	83%	87%	83%	89%
Value for Money	70%	77%	73%	61%*
Bus stop where you caught the bus	76%	77%	79%	86%
Length of time you had to wait for bus	72%	78%	72%	88%
Punctuality of bus stop (arriving on time)	78%	81%	75%	86%
Bus Driver	87%	88%	87%	91%
Length of time bus journey took	84%	84%	83%	90%

*The survey shows the biggest influences on this rating are 'Cost for the distance travelled' (28%) and 'Cost of bus fares now compared to what they were 12 months ago' (26%).

- 1.5 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, over 7 million people were travelling on Stagecoach East Midlands local bus services. During the pandemic, passenger numbers decreased by over 61%, however, as seen in the data in Appendix D, passenger numbers overall are approximately between 82% and 84% of pre pandemic levels.

- 1.6 The Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority (GLCCA) will become the Local Transport Authority for the Greater Lincolnshire area and take on the associated responsibilities and local public transport powers on 1st April 2026. These functions include transport strategy, planning investment, delivery and operations and maintenance across rail, road and bus networks. GLCCA agreed on 12 November 2025 that Constituent Authorities retain responsibility in a number of areas including "Public transport operations and service delivery will remain the responsibility of Constituent Authorities". GLCCA have confirmed the delegation will include elements in relation to the delivery of the 2026/2027 BSIP delivery programme. Additionally, GLCCA will develop an inter-authority agreement that delegates the responsibility for the delivery to the constituent authorities for a minimum period of 12 months commencing 1 April 2026.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 Once the BSIP funding ends, all local bus services supported by the BSIP will need to be commercially viable or the bus network will need to be adjusted accordingly.
- 2.2 It is envisaged BSIP and EP performance will be considered by the DfT including Greater Lincolnshire County Combined Authority (GLCCA) when they consider future external funding bids or allocate funding, therefore poor performance may have a negative impact.
- 2.3 The continued challenging economic environment may impact on the commercial viability of bus services, which would require future consideration regarding subsidy.
- 2.4 The BSIP and EP provides the Council with an opportunity to be seen as a best practice authority which may enhance future bidding opportunities.
- 2.5 On 5 December 2025, the DfT announced the Local Authority Bus Grant funding allocations (includes BSIP) with a funding allocation announced for the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority and not North East Lincolnshire Council as in previous years. At the time of writing this report, North East Lincolnshire Council's 2026/2027 BSIP funding allocation has not been confirmed by GLCCA, therefore there is a risk that the local authority could receive less BSIP funding, when compared to previous years. Should this occur, the EP would need to review the delivery programme which is included in Appendix A.
- 2.6 An overall equality and diversity impact assessment identifies there will be no negative impacts because of this project. The project aims to encourage and enable increased use of public transport and make the bus network more accessible in North East Lincolnshire. Individual equality impact assessments will be undertaken prior to the funding for each individual scheme being agreed.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1. This report provides an update, as approved in the February 2025 update

report, in relation to the work of the Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme, options are to be considered as part of the EP delivery process.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

4.1. It is not expected there are any reputational or communications issues associated with this report.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. The confirmed NELC BSIP and EP funding allocation is:

Financial Year	BSIP+ Revenue	BSIP Phase 3 Revenue	Revenue	Capital	Total
2023/24	£280,128	£0.00	£1,016,096	£1,011,256	£2,307,480
2024/25	£280,128	£893,000	£1,605,275	£2,225,255	£5,003,658
2025/26	£0.00	£0.00	£1,705,659	£2,010,583	£3,716,242
2026/27 (estimated)	£0.00	£0.00	£2,384,445	£1,897,174	£4,281,619
Total	£560,256	£893,000	£4,327,030	£5,247,094	£15,308,999

5.2. At the time of writing this report, the spend to date within the 2025/2026 financial year, including value of orders raised, is as follows:

	Capital	Revenue	Total
Available 2025/26 funding (<i>inc carry forward from previous years</i>)	£4,759,462	£2,348,349	£7,107,811
Value of Orders	£526,877.89	£2,252,562.31	£2,715,295.12
Spend to Date (<i>transacted</i>)	£496,218.25	£1,524,808.78	£2,021,027.03

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

6.1. During the development of the BSIP and EP, including any associated document updates, public consultation was delivered, which identified the need for discounted fares for young people.

6.2. The BSIP and EP have delivered cheaper fares for young people and those in education/ apprenticeships, which, in conjunction with other BSIP measures, helped to break down barriers for young people accessing employment and educational opportunities.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The Government expects Local Authorities to develop ambitious strategies, targets, and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area and to work with bus operators and energy providers to include ambitions to decarbonise

the local bus fleet. The measures within the BSIP will encourage the use of public transport within the borough by making it cheaper, and more accessible, which supports the Councils Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, by encouraging and supporting modal shift away from single occupancy car trips to public transport.

8. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The BSIP and EP aims to improve public transport accessibility and deliver reliable bus services to employment, education and healthcare facilities in North East Lincolnshire. Where local residents switch modes of travel away from private motor vehicles, there will be benefits in terms of air quality, transport related CO2 emissions and the quality of the local environment.
- 8.2 The BSIP funding has delivered lower bus fares for local residents which helps to reduce financial strain, support a healthy standard of living and improves accessibility.
- 8.3 Public transport is key to improving health, reducing inequalities, and creating sustainable communities in line with Marmot principles.

9. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 9.1 The Economy Scrutiny Panel considered the BSIP on the 12 October 2021 and the EP document on the 1 March 2022.
- 9.2 The Transport, Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Panel received an update report on the North East Lincolnshire BSIP on the 12 November 2024.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Delivery of the proposed 2026/27 BSIP programme is subject to confirmation of the 2026/27 allocation from GLCCA. Should funding be lower than previous years, the Council will be required to review and re-prioritise the 2026/27 delivery programme, potentially reducing the scale or timing of planned schemes to maintain affordability.
- 10.2 There remains a significant sustainability risk beyond the BSIP programme period. Should BSIP funding cease, any bus services currently supported through BSIP revenue streams would need to become commercially viable or will require ongoing subsidy, which could create future revenue budget pressures for the Council. This will be monitored as part of medium-term financial planning.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The report provides an annual update. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report. The recommendations are appropriate for a matter of this nature.

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

13. WARD IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The BSIP contains interventions that impact on all Wards.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan, Scrutiny Report, 12 November 2024

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/06/11.-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan.pdf>

14.2 North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan, Cabinet Report, 3 April 2024

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2023/06/4.-Cabinet-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-ReportPDF-120KBicon-namepaperclip-prefixfa.pdf>

14.3 Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/06/North-East-Lincolnshire-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-June-2024.pdf>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/06/North-East-Lincolnshire-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-Appendix.pdf>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/01/PART-1-Enhanced-Bus-Quality-Partnership-January-2024-Update.pdf>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/03/PART-2-Scheme-document-January-2024-v2.pdf>

<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/assets/uploads/2024/01/Appendix-Documents-January-2024-Update.pdf>

14.4 National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

15. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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Appendix A – Proposed 2026/2027 BSIP Delivery Programme

Ref	Scheme	2026/27 Financial Year	
		Capital	Revenue
1	Public Transport Highway Improvements	£500,000	
2	Grimsby Transport Hub	£1,197,174	
3	Bus Service Support		£1,716,811
4	Pocket Park & Ride		£20,000
5	Bradley Road Bus Service (11 Service) or Discounted Fare Measures		£138,756
6	Bus stop infrastructure - shelters	£200,000	
7	Studies & Design or Bus service Operators Grant		£19,602
8	Monitoring & Evaluation		£18,511
9	ASB Campaign		£30,000
10	BSIP Project Management		£40,765
11	Pre 9:30 Concessionary Travel		£400,000
		Total	£1,897,174
		Overall Total	£4,281,619

Appendix B – 2025 BSIP Timeline of Progress to Date

January 2025	The Government announced changes to the National £2 fare cap, which saw capped fares increase to £3 from the 1 January 2025 until March 2027.
February 2025	<p>The Council commenced with a pre consultation on a proposed bus lane on Cleethorpe Road. The purpose of the pre consultation was to understand what key stakeholders would require, should the bus lane go ahead. The results from the pre consultation were used by the Council to enhance the initial proposal to consider the requirements of all road users and stakeholders.</p> <p>On the 10 February the Portfolio Holder considered an update report on the BSIP and EP.</p> <p><u>8.-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-and-Enhanced-Bus-Quality-Partnership-Progress-Report.pdf</u></p>
March 2025	<p>In line with the new National £3 fare cap, the Council altered the existing leisure & shopper ticket to target areas of passenger growth. The fare measure was made available in evenings only after 6pm and cost £1.50 for a single fare to support the boroughs evenings economy.</p> <p>From March 2025 – December 2025, over 80,000 £1.50 single fares have been sold and supported through the BSIP.</p>
April 2025	The Council carried out some highway improvement works on New Haven Terrace to benefit local bus services. Through engagement with the local bus operator, Stagecoach, it was identified that buses were frequently impeded by an existing traffic island and parked cars, therefore, using BSIP funding the Council reduced the width of the existing traffic island to enable the free flow of buses.
May 2025	The Council and Stagecoach hosted an event in Grimsby Town Centre to inform bus passengers of upcoming timetable changes, answer any questions they may have, and hand out local printed bus town guides.
June 2025	<p>On the 1 June 2025, the bus operator, Stagecoach commenced with the following bus service enhancements, with BSIP support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Service – Evening services extending from Immingham to Cleethorpes Pier 7 days a week.

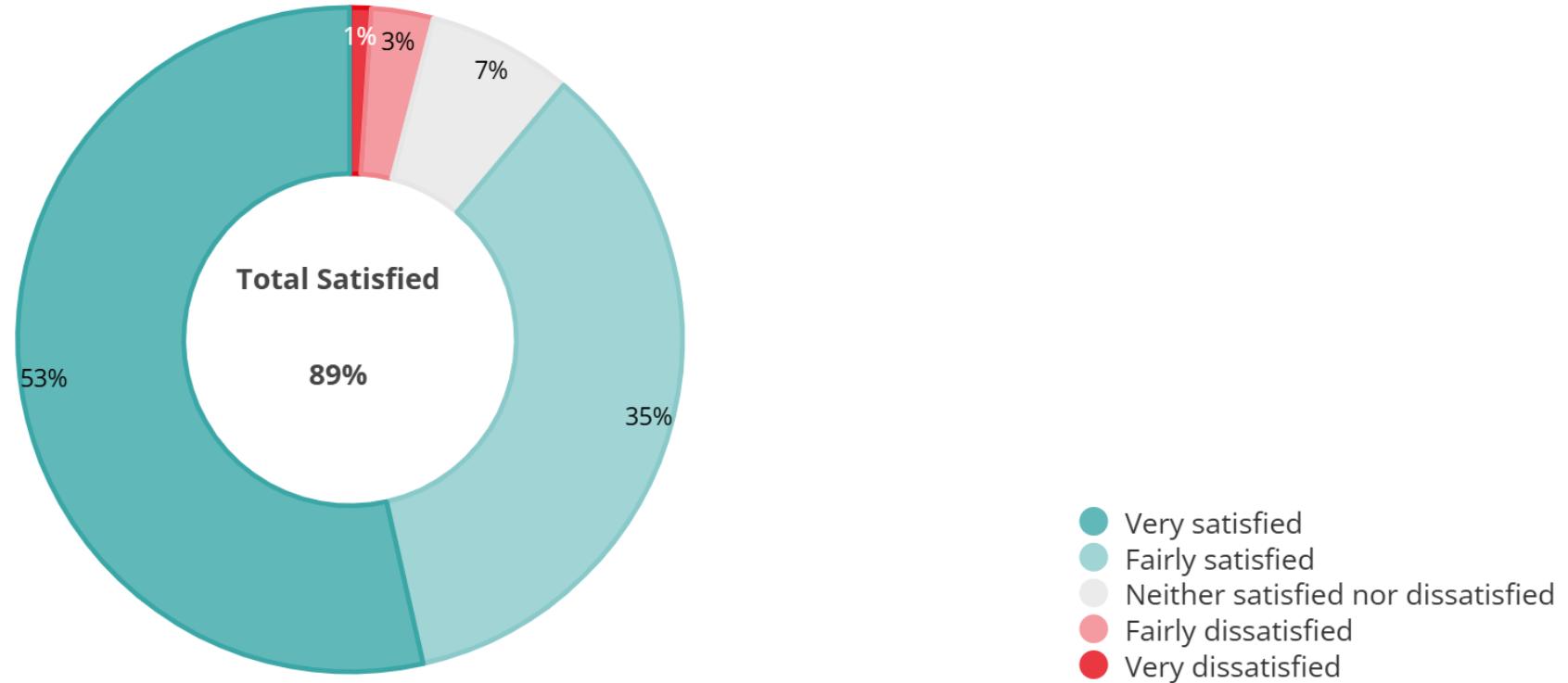
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 Service – 30-minute frequency provided in an evening and on Sundays, including an evening and Sunday route extension into Thorpe Park. • 20 Service – Service enhanced to provide a Sunday bus service, including a route extension to Moody Lane and Gilbey Road. • 251 Service (formally 51) – Service was revised to provide connections with the 250 service and an hourly Sunday service. • 250 Service – Enhanced to provide an hourly service between Grimsby and Hull with an improved timetable, including a Sunday service. <p>The Council, in Partnership with Stagecoach East Midlands, launched a pocket Park & Ride to support Cleethorpes Armed Forces weekend. During the Armed Forces weekend, over 26,000 people used local bus services, and of those over 5,000 passengers were using the Park & Ride services.</p>
July 2025	<p>The Council carried out lining improvement work on Morrisons Roundabout. The local bus operator reported issues with vehicles straight lining the roundabout and not adhering to the two lanes, therefore the Council improved the roundabout's lining to both increase the lane widths and enhance the two lanes.</p> <p>Pre-application was submitted to the Councils Planning department for the future Grimsby Transport Hub.</p>
August 2025	<p>Council Cabinet members visited the Mansfield bus station to view examples of best practice local bus infrastructure. The lessons learned during this site visit will be used when shaping the vision for the future Grimsby Transport Hub.</p> <p>Demolition works commenced on the Osborne Street building units to make way for the future Grimsby Transport Hub.</p>
September 2025	<p>BSIP works commenced on the Great Coates Road junction. Stagecoach had reported issues with the tight pinch point on Great Coates Road adjacent Wybers Way, which at times resulted in the roadside railings being damaged, or the bus struggling to make the manoeuvre. The purpose of the Great Coates Road project was to widen the lane to allow local bus services and other large vehicle to access Great Coates Road better. In</p>

	<p>addition, the Council also carried out some signal enhancement works at this junction, including the installation of signal priority equipment.</p> <p>The Council commenced with the pre consultation to review the existing Riverhead Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which is the current bus station in Grimsby.</p>
October 2025	<p>Works at the Great Coates Road junction completed.</p> <p>On the 22 October, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport considered a report regarding the Riverhead TRO review. During the meeting the Portfolio Holder approved for the TRO to progress to the statutory consultation phase.</p> <p><u>5.-25-06-Grimsby-Town-Centre-Various-Streets.pdf</u></p> <p>Demolition of the Osborne Street building units complete.</p>
November 2025	To support the build up to Christmas and the Freshney Place late night shopping, the Partnership enhanced the current £1.50 fare measure to include weekends.
December 2025	To help improve traffic flows at a busy Grimsby junction, including improving bus access to and from Grimsby Hospital, the Council installed a box junction at the Scartho Road x Grimsby Hospital junction
	The Council commenced with the statutory TRO consultation for the Riverhead.

Appendix C – 2025 Transport Focus Satisfaction Survey Results

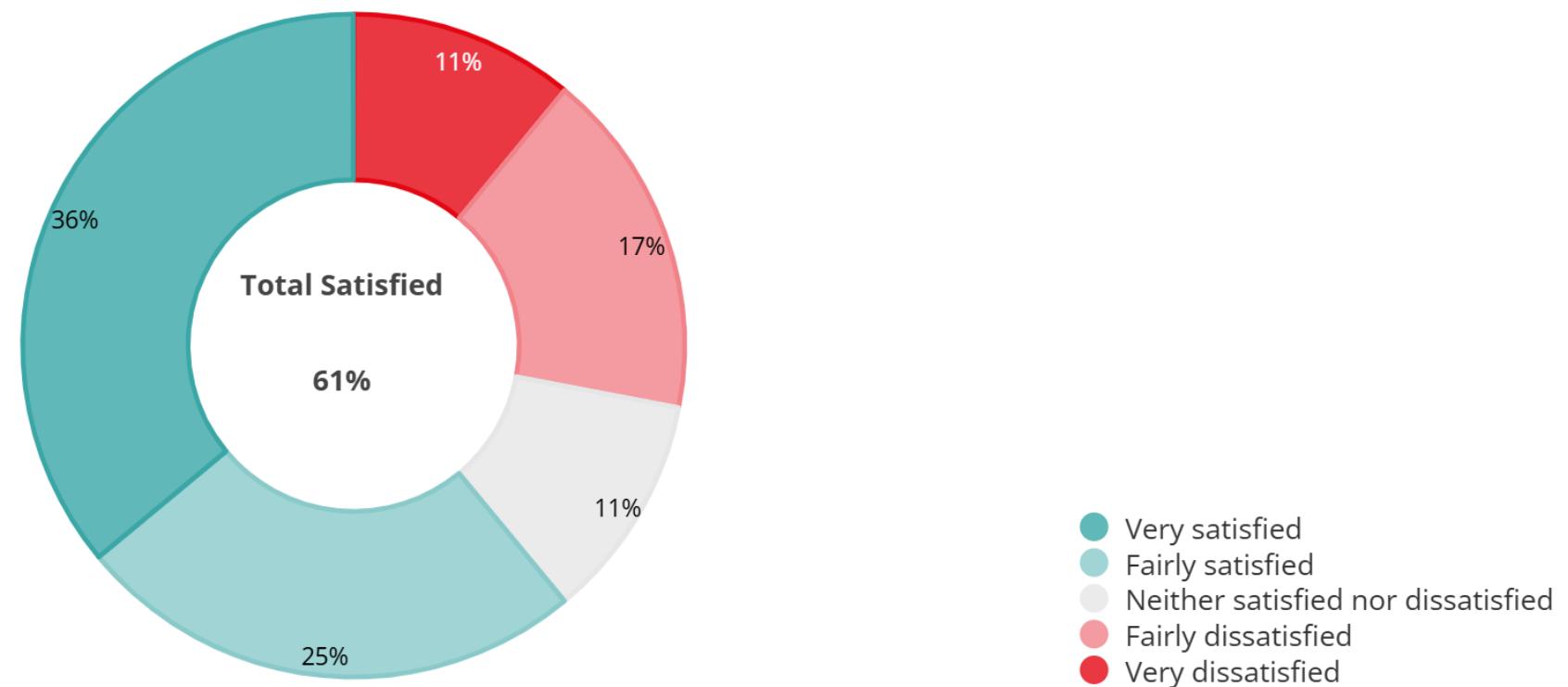


Q9. How satisfied were you with your bus Journey? (Year to Date)





Q10A. How satisfied were you with the value for money of your journey? (Year to Date)





Q8r1-Q8r5. How satisfied were you with each of the following during the journey? (Year to Date)



Appendix D – North East Lincolnshire Bus Passenger Numbers

