A Clean Air Plan for Bradford

Proposed Clean Air Zone

Consultation Report – Businesses with a Fleet

May 2020

breathe better BRADFORD

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Contents

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SYSTRA Consultants have prepared this report on behalf of Bradford Council. This activity is supporting the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy as it develops a Clean Air Plan for the District. Thank you to everyone who participated in the consultation exercise.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Survey

The government has set out its vision for air quality in its guidance for Clean Air Zone planning: "Clean Air Zones improve the urban environment to support public health and the local economy, making cities more attractive places to live, work, do business and spend leisure time. They support cities to grow and transition to a low emission economy thus ensuring these benefits are sustainable for the long term".[1]

Bradford Council has been challenged by Government to present proposals which reduce levels of Nitrogen Dioxide at locations where limits are currently exceeded within the shortest possible time. SYSTRA was appointed by Bradford Council in May 2019 to provide support with communications and stakeholder engagement for the emerging Air Quality Plan, including consideration of introducing a Clean Air Zone (CAZ).

This report summarises the results of surveys undertaken as part of a second phase of the public consultation, to help inform the Full Business Case by gauging levels of need and the suitability of the proposed support packages, and to gather views of those most likely to be affected.

1.2 Methodology

A self-completion on-line survey was chosen in order to tailor often complex information to specific groups, maximise communication channels, reduce delivery and printing costs and to simplify analysis. The survey design drew upon earlier surveys from the first phase of the consultation, as well as previous surveys prepared in Leeds and Sheffield & Rotherham and the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) guidance. Those with reading or language difficulties were invited to contact the Council with a request for braille or paper versions, which we understand was requested on a handful of occasions.

Government guidance for planning and implementing Clean Air Zones states that drivers of taxis, LGVs and HGVs and local businesses are critical stakeholders as they are most likely to be affected by proposals[2]. The survey and supporting information were structured to address the following groups:

- General public

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[1] Clean Air Zone Framework - Principles for setting up Clean Air Zones in England, DfT/DEFRA, May 2017
[2] Ditto

- Taxi drivers
- Businesses located in Bradford with a fleet
- Businesses located in Bradford without a fleet
- Coaches

The survey was published on the Council's website for a period of six weeks between Thursday 13th February and Thursday 26th March and was subsequently extended by two weeks until Wednesday 8th April. The Covid-19 outbreak and stay at home order announced on 23rd March and cancellation of local elections gave a larger window to complete the consultation.

- Email invitations sent to subscribers for Bradford Council Newsletters;
- Bradford Council website;
- Bradford Council social media channels;
- Press release to Telegraph and Argus and other local news outlets;
- Variable Message signs (VMS) on principal routes in Bradford;
- Public consultation events; and
- Leaflets sent to all Bradford based businesses with business rate letters.

Efforts were subsequently made to boost responses from businesses, both those with and without a fleet, including:

- Telephone calls;
- Meeting with Confederation of Passenger Transport local members;
- Targeted VMS messages to van drivers;
- Emails to Invest in Bradford, and other Ilkley, Airedale and Bradford business networks;
- Emails via the Federation of Small Business, Road Haulage Association and Freight Transport Association; and
- Postcard drops at around 20 local building, plumbing and electrical merchants.

1.3 Response Rates and Distribution

A total of 1,637 responses were received, this included 805 members of general public, 744 taxi drivers or owners, 48 businesses with fleet, 33 businesses without fleet, plus a small number of coach operators (7). Eight letters were submitted from local business, taxi and other interest groups in addition to the numbers included in the table below.

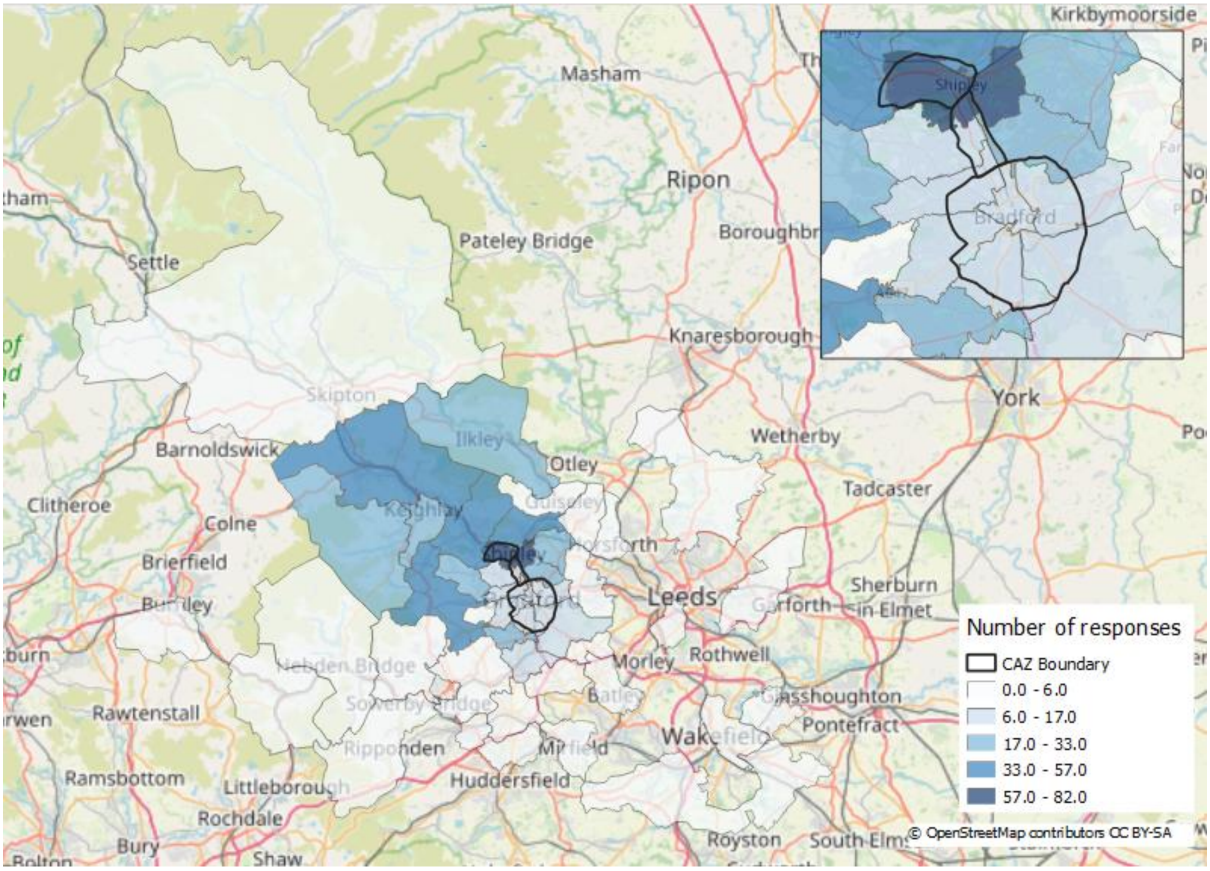
1.1 Responses per Group

Group	Number of Responses
General public	805
Taxi drivers / owners	744
Businesses with a fleet	48
Businesses without a fleet	33
Coaches	7
Total	**1,637**

The response rate is encouraging from the general public and from taxi drivers / owners, representing approximately 25% of the trade. Response rates from the general public were much lower than those received in the first phase of the consultation, but this was perhaps to be expected since the proposals do not include private cars in the charging scheme. Some coach owners may have responded as part of the general public survey, but the response rate was too low to draw any robust conclusions from this group.

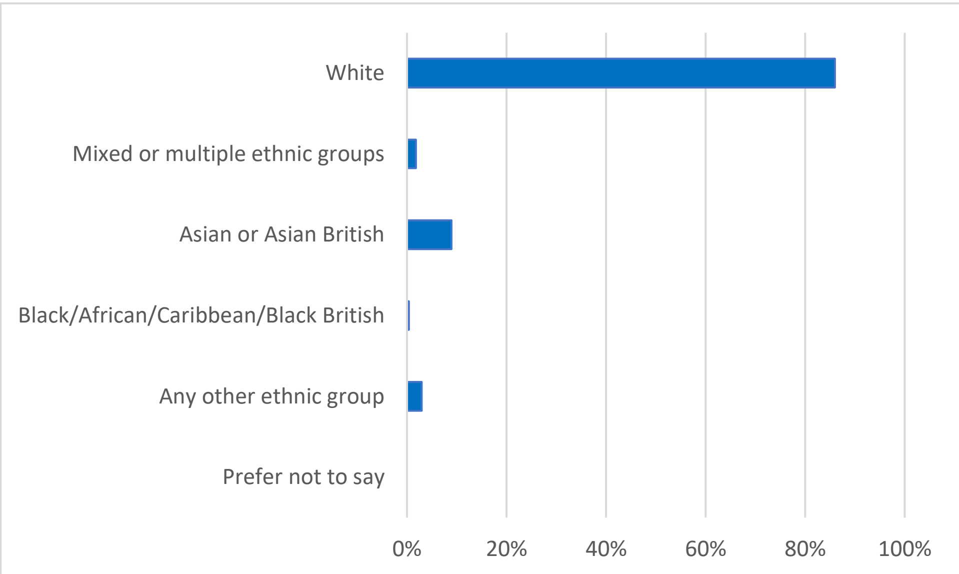
The wards with the highest number of responses from the general public were Shipley and wards along the Airedale corridor towards Keighley.

1.2 Number of General Public Responses per Postcode

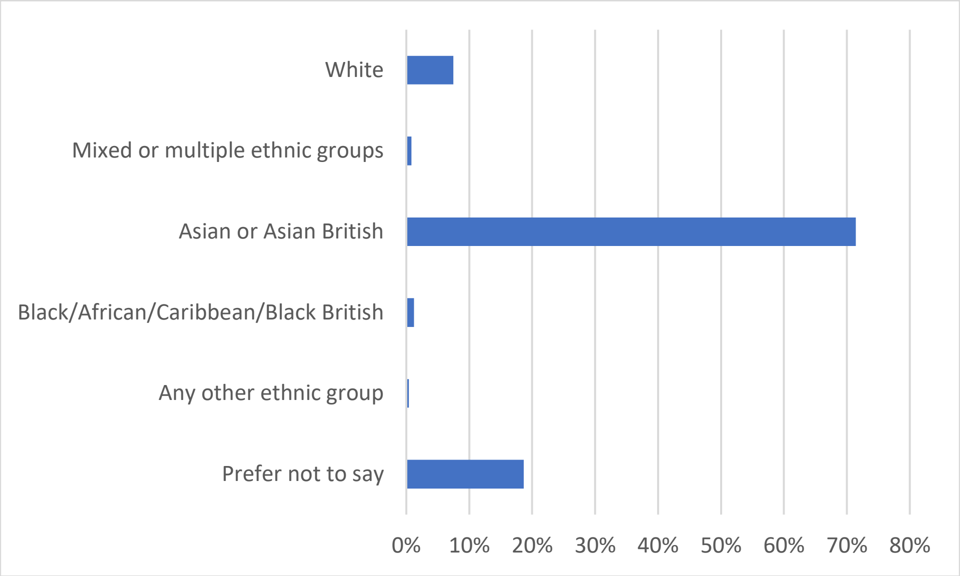


The views of different ethnic groups are reasonably well represented across the total survey numbers although they are skewed within the general public survey. In the general public survey, white respondents accounted for 86% of responses, meaning they were over-represented when compared with 64% represented in the total Bradford population. Amongst taxi drivers who responded, most responses were from non-white drivers or owners (74%) or one third of the overall survey responses.

1.3 Ethnicity of General Public responses (n=784)



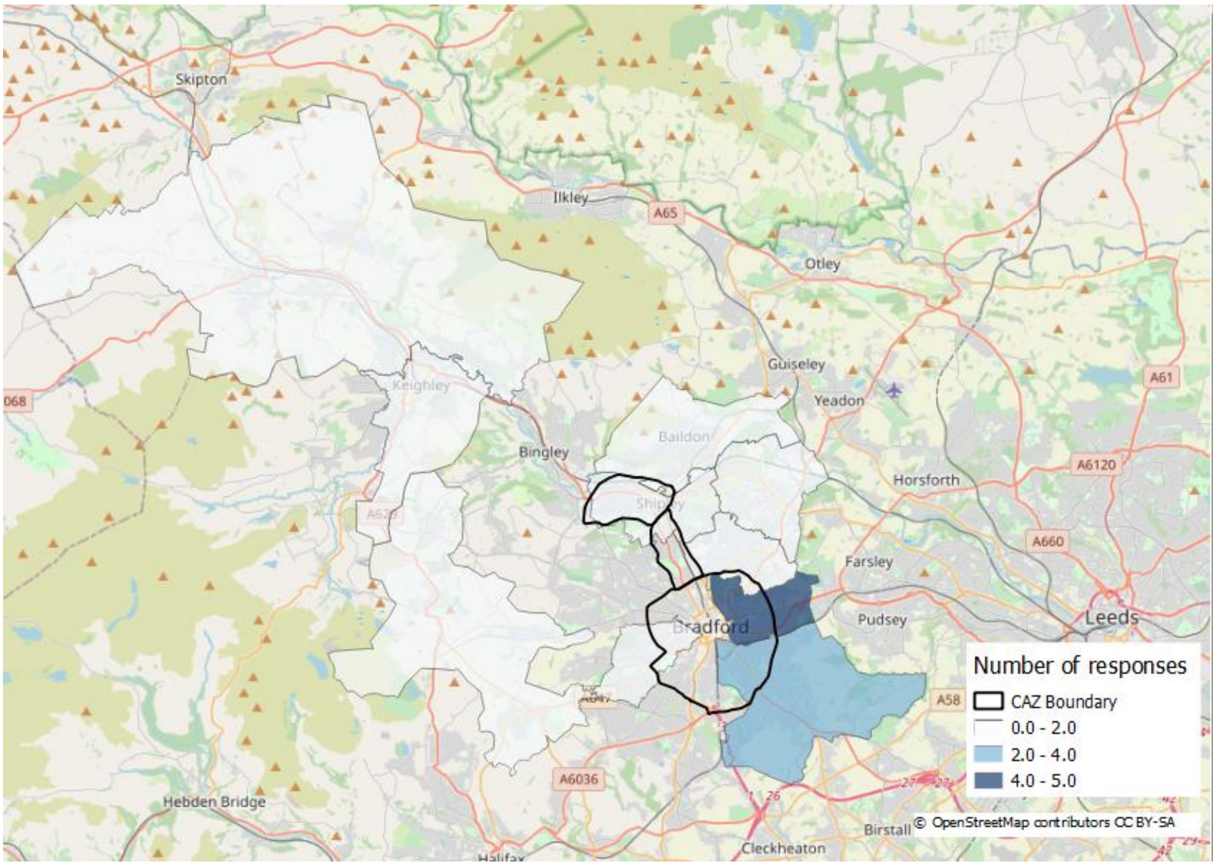
1.4 Ethnicity of Taxi Driver responses (n=725)



2 Businesses with a Fleet Responses

This report discusses results from the businesses with a fleet who completed the survey. The sample size for this group is 48. The locations of these individuals are mapped in **Figure 2.1**. Albeit the overall sample was relatively small, the highest number of responses were from BD3 (5) and BD4 (4), east and south-east of the centre respectively. *Given the small sample size, caution should be exercised if extrapolating the results.*

2.1 Number of Responses per Postcode District – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)

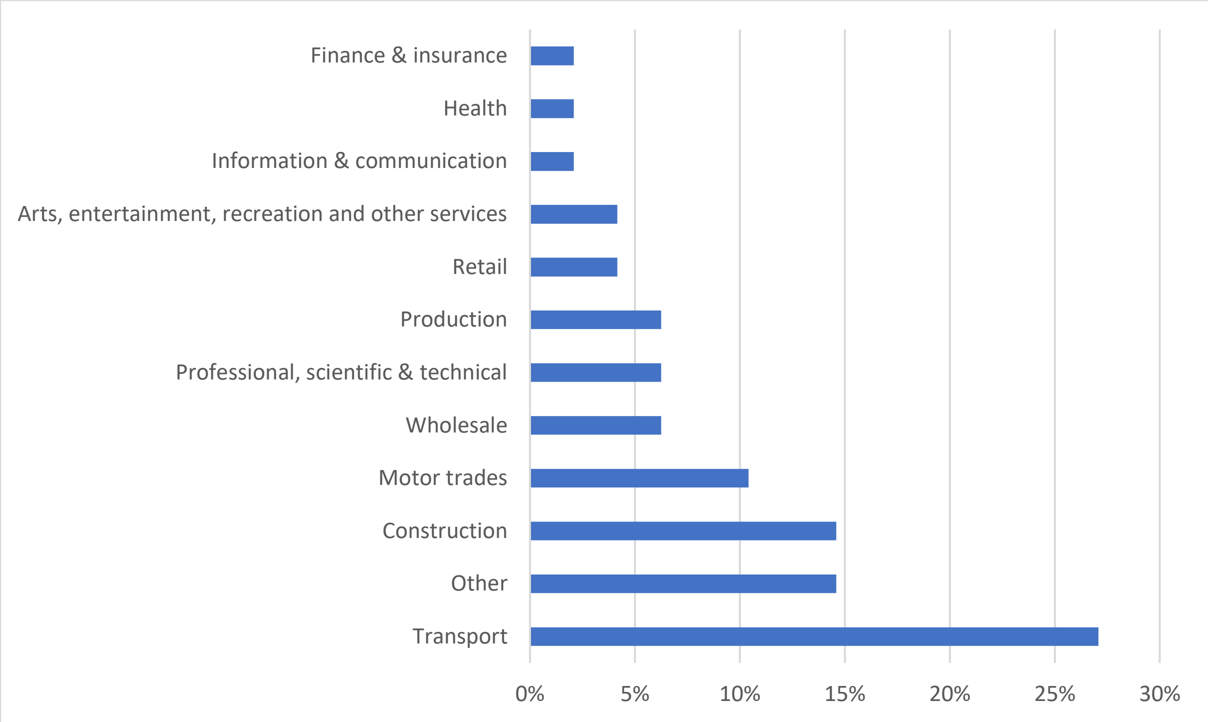


The top three responses when asked how they heard about the consultation were as follows; 19% through email, also 19% via word of mouth and 13% selected ‘other’. Other responses given included flyer with business rates, the library, meeting and google alert.

2.2 Business Information

Respondents were asked information about the business they were completing the survey on behalf of. **Figure 2.2** shows the sectors within which the respondent businesses operate. The highest proportion at 27% classified themselves as ‘Transport’ (this is not surprising given that there was another survey available for businesses without fleet), followed by 15% being Construction companies and a further 15% selecting ‘other’. ‘Other’ businesses included a large road haulage association, trade sales of PPE, and signing design.

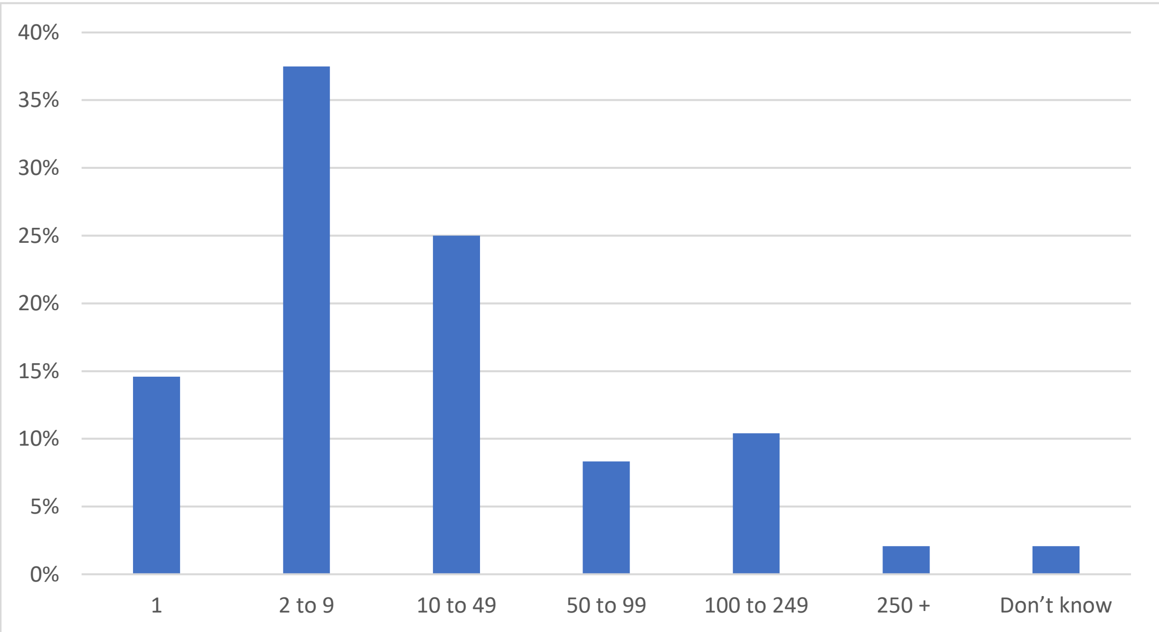
2.2 Sector of Organisation - Businesses with a Fleet (n = 48)



Number of Employees

Of the responding businesses with a fleet, most are relatively small in terms of staff workforce, with 38% employing between 2 and 9 people in the Bradford District and a further quarter had between 10 and 49 staff. Only 6 businesses (12%) had 100 or more employees in the area.

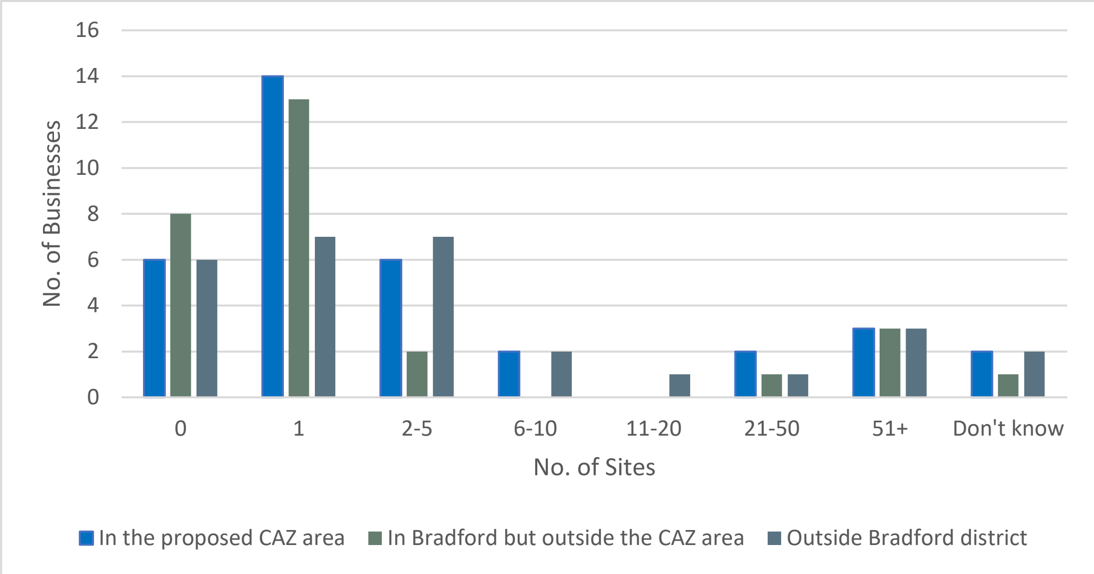
2.3 Number of Employees – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)



Location of Businesses

Further detail about the locations of business premises was collected as businesses were asked how many sites their organisation has in the proposed CAZ boundary, in the rest of the Bradford District and outside. Most responding businesses with a fleet (14) just have one site within the CAZ, although a further 6 have between 2 and 5 sites. Three businesses suggest they have over 50 sites in the CAZ.

2.4 Location and Number of Business Premises – Businesses with a Fleet (n=35)

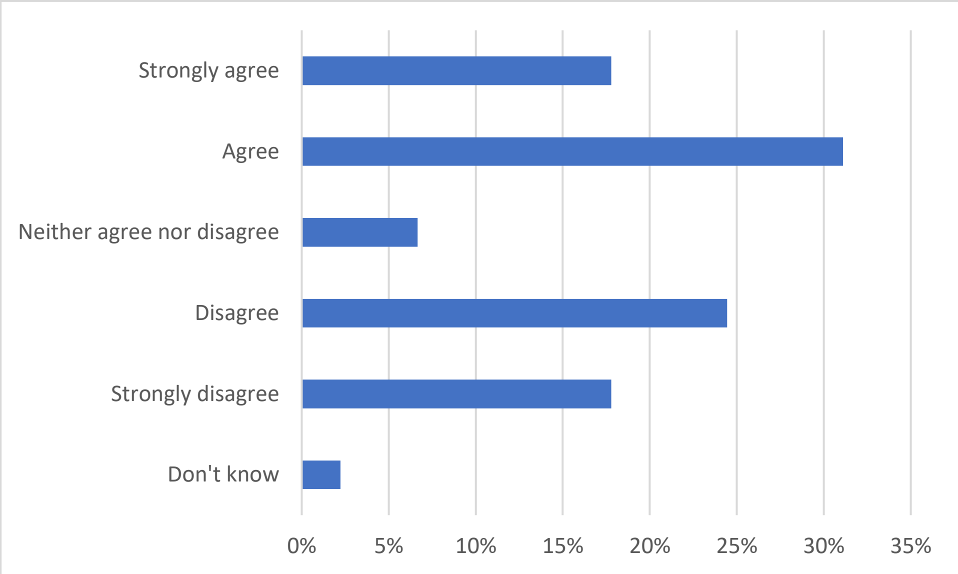


2.3 Air Quality Perceptions

Over two-fifths of businesses with a fleet support the implementation of a Clean Air Zone (43%), with a smaller proportion (37%) saying they didn't and the remaining fifth selecting 'don't know'.

When asked whether they thought the Clean Air Zone will have a positive impact on Bradford's air quality, the responses were generally positive with just under half (49%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing. A smaller proportion (42%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the remaining 9% unsure.

2.5 Improving Air Quality – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)

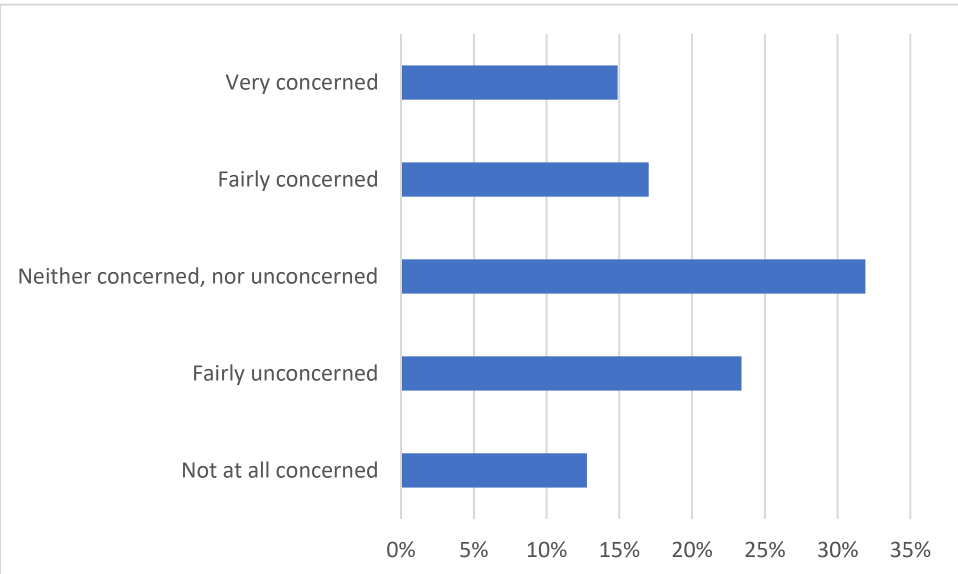


When asked for their opinion about whether tackling air pollution should be a priority for the Council, over half (51%) of businesses with a fleet think it should be, while less than a third (32%) disagree.

Concerns About Air Pollution

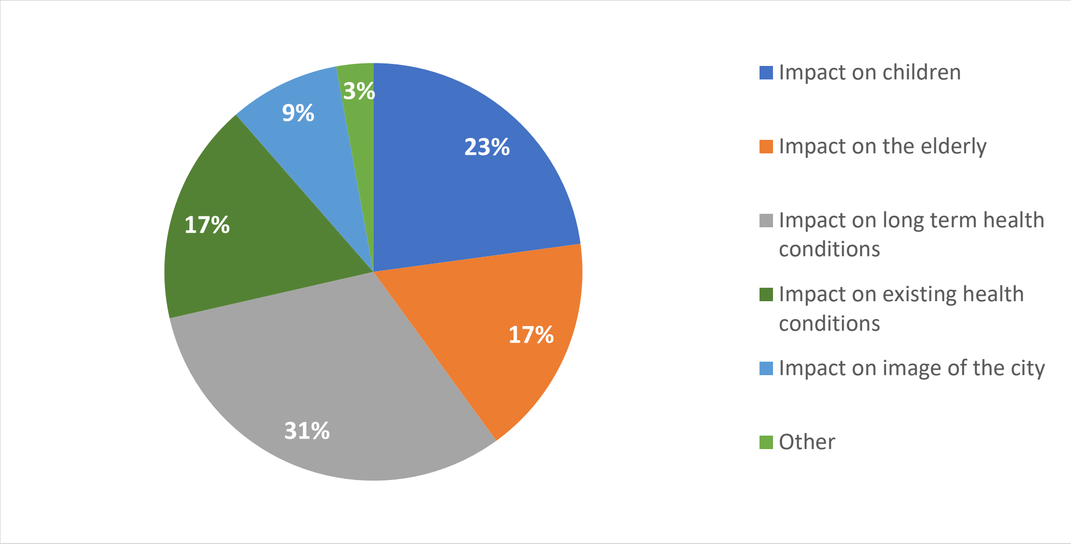
Concern about the levels of air pollution in Bradford currently were fairly evenly split into thirds; with less than a third being fairly or very concerned (32%) and over a third (36%) being fairly unconcerned or not at all concerned and the remainder neither nor.

2.6 Levels of Concern About Air Pollution – Businesses with a Fleet (n=47)



Of the people who expressed a concern about the levels of air pollution, the nature of their concerns are captured in **Figure 2.7**. Almost a third of those who expressed concerns are focused on the long-term health impacts, followed by just under quarter concerned for the impact on children, followed by the same proportion worried about the impact on existing health conditions and the elderly.

2.7 Nature of Concerns About Air Pollution – Businesses with a Fleet (n= 35)

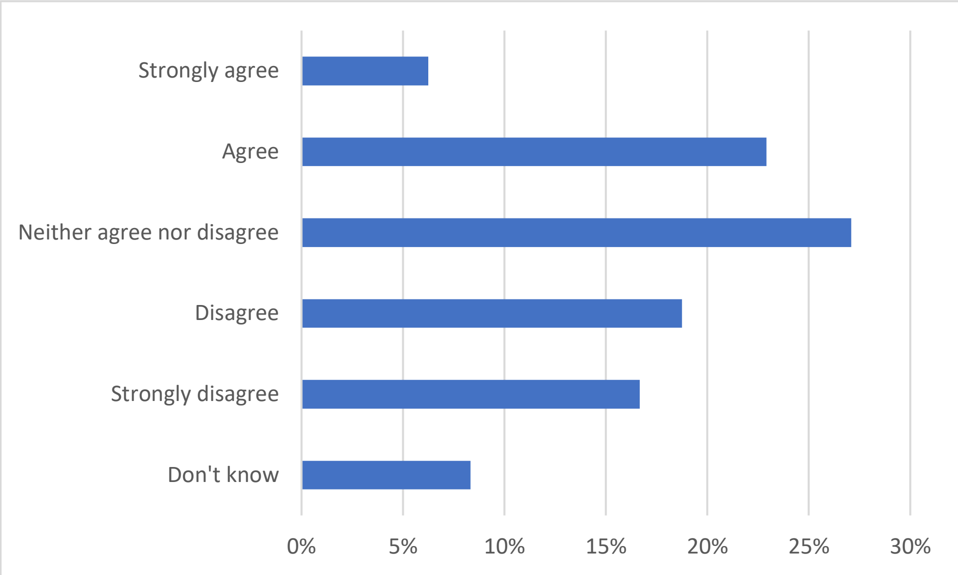


2.4 Clean Air Zone Proposals

Geographical Area of the Proposed CAZ

When asked if the CAZ covers the right geographical area, again opinion was relatively evenly divided, but with slightly more disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (35%) compared to 29% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

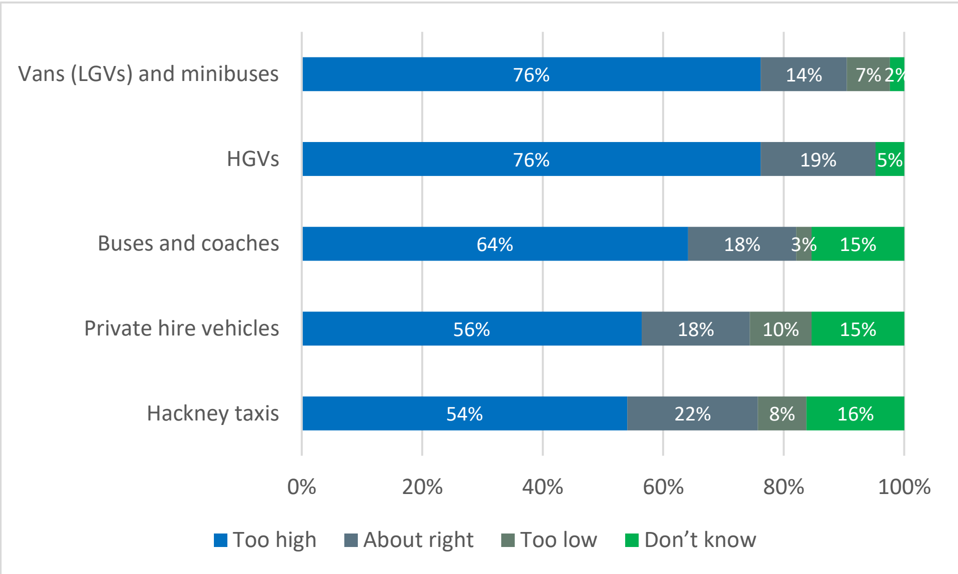
2.8 Agreement with the Geographical Area of the CAZ – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)



Proposed Level of Daily Charge

Businesses were asked what they thought about the proposed daily charge for different non-compliant vehicles. For each of the five types of vehicles over half think the charges are too high, although around a fifth think charges are about right. The proposed charge is of most concert to van and minibus drivers.

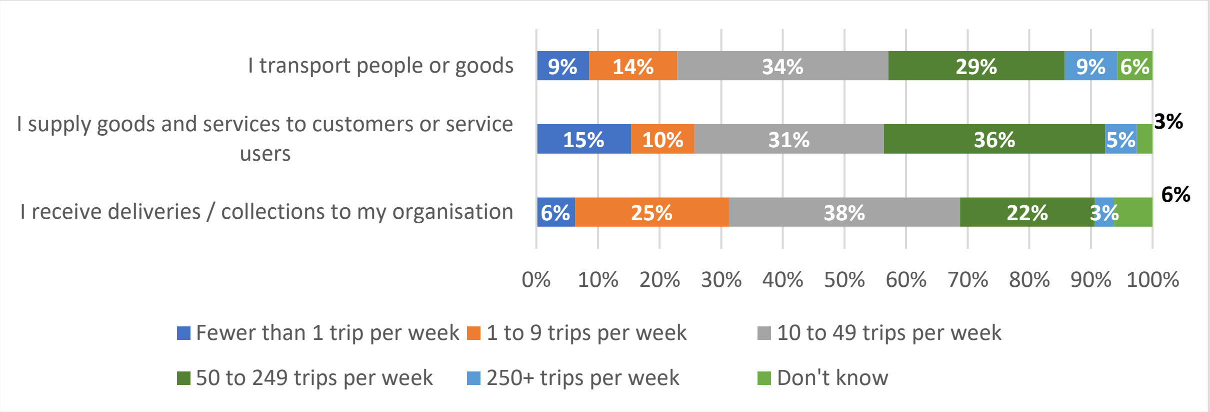
Views on the Proposed Daily Charge by Vehicle Type – Businesses with a Fleet (n=42)



Frequency of Trips Within the Proposed CAZ

Businesses with a fleet were asked how many trips per week they believe to be made within the CAZ as part of their operations as well as what the nature of those trips are. **Figure 2.9** shows that of the 39 businesses who completed this question, between 59% and 67% said their business generates between 10 and 249 trips a week for all three journey purposes suggested.

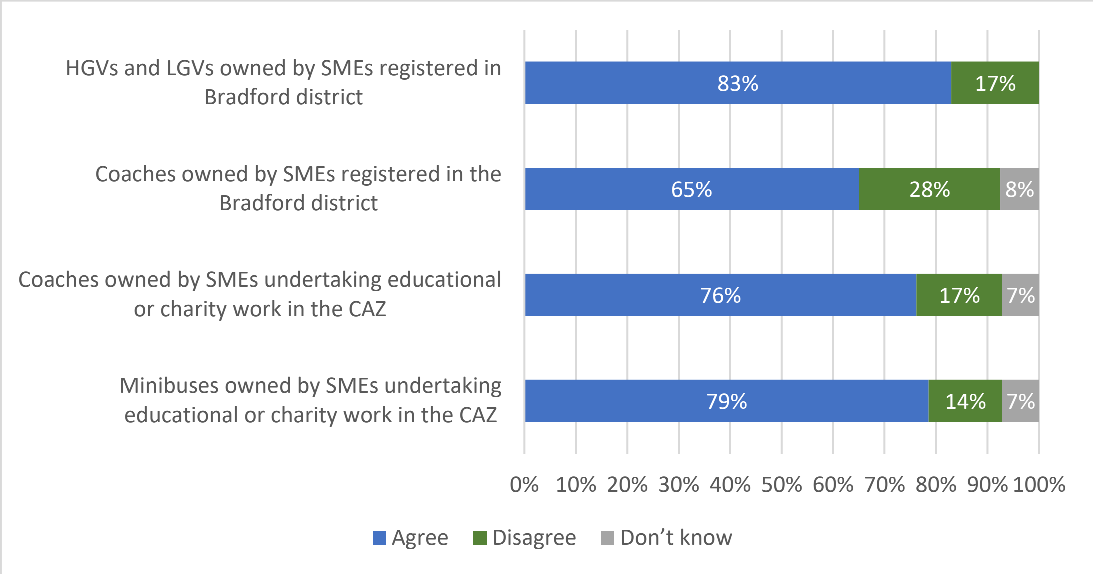
2.9 Frequency of Trips in the Proposed CAZ – Businesses with a Fleet (n=39)



Exemptions

Next businesses with a fleet were asked if they thought certain types of vehicles should be exempted from paying the daily CAZ charges. Between 65% and 83% of respondents thought the suggested vehicles/journey types should be exempt. The highest proportion of respondents agreeing was for HGVs and LGVs owned by SMEs registered in the Bradford District.

2.10 Agreement with Additional Exemptions – Businesses with a Fleet (n=47)

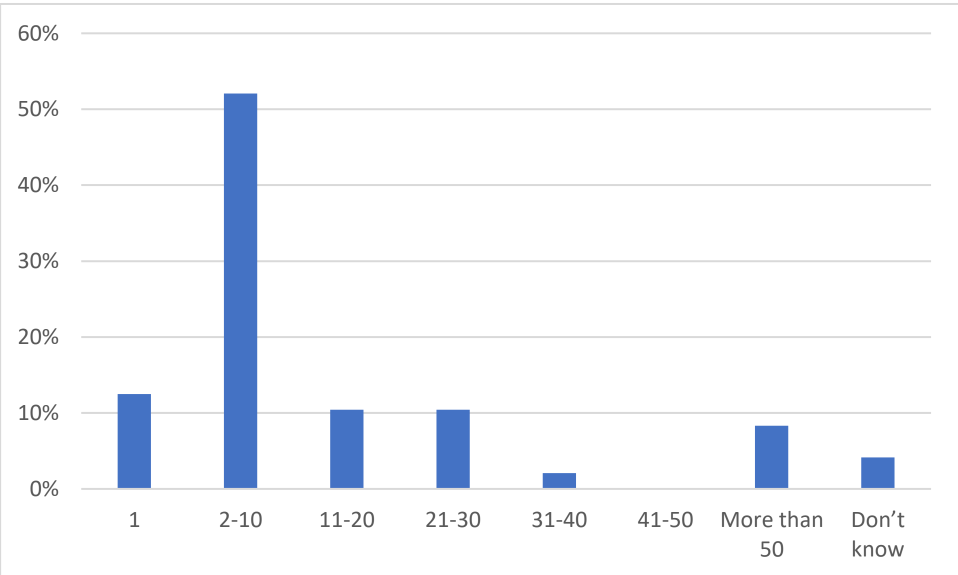


2.5 Vehicle Information

Fleet Size

Most businesses who completed the survey have relatively small fleets of between two and ten vehicles (52%), but there were also four businesses (8%) who have over fifty vehicles (**Figure 2.11**).

2.11 Fleet Size – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)

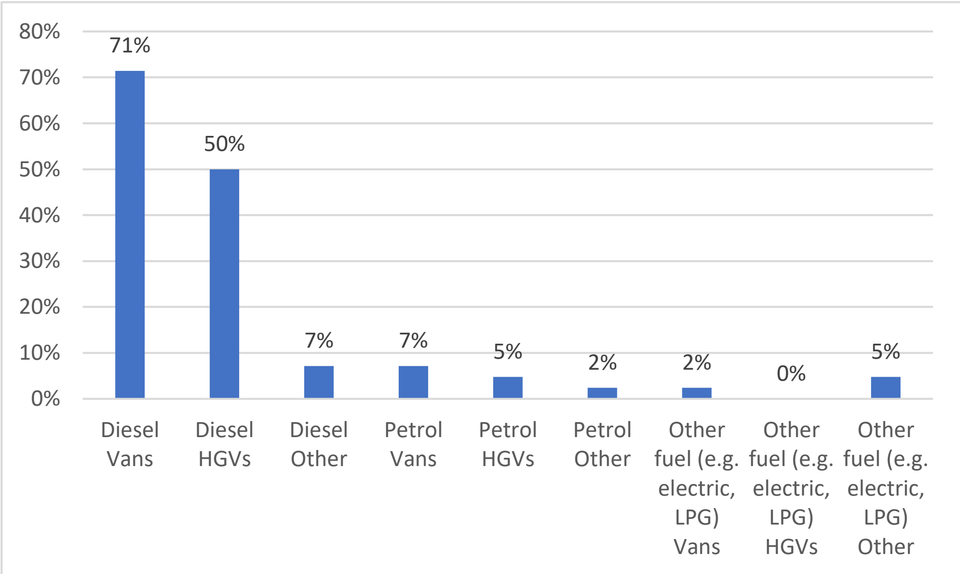


Vehicle Class and Fuel Type

Respondents were then asked how many of each specific vehicle class and fuel-type of vehicle they operate. Forty two businesses responded to this question. The following figures breakdown their responses, firstly by business (**Figure 2.12**) and secondly by all vehicles recorded (**Figure 2.13)**.

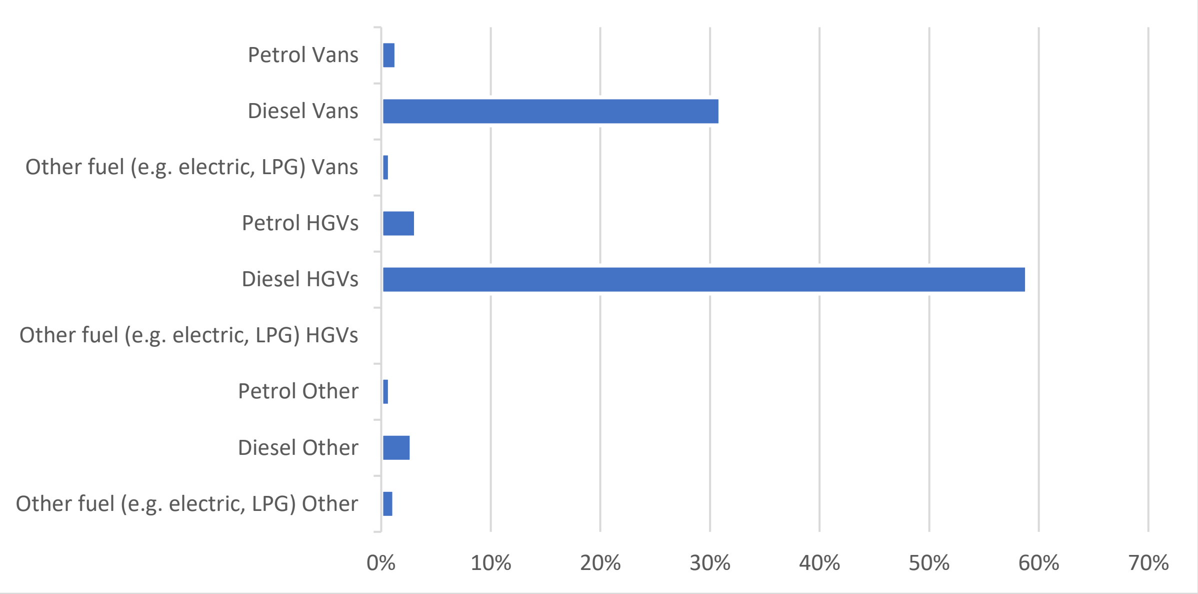
Of the responding businesses, nearly three quarters of them operate some diesel vans and half of these businesses operate some diesel HGVs. All other vehicle categories are much less represented.

2.12 Breakdown of Fleet Vehicle and Fuel Type by Business – Businesses with a Fleet (n=42)



The same data has been charted differently in **Figure 2.13** where of all 504 vehicles recorded by the 42 responding businesses, almost three fifths are diesel HGVs (59%) and just under a third are diesel vans (31%).

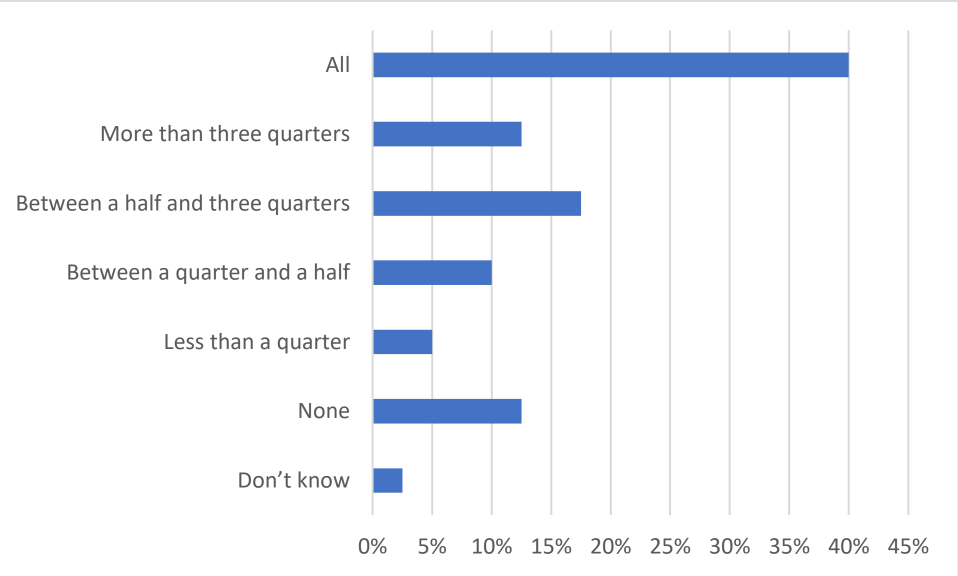
2.13 Breakdown of Fleet Vehicle and Fuel Types by Total Vehicles – Businesses with a Fleet (n= 504 vehicles from 42 businesses)



Proportion of Fleet That Would Be Charged

Businesses with a fleet were asked what proportion of their fleet would be charged to drive into the CAZ. Two fifths of businesses said all their vehicles would be charged and seven out of ten expect at least half their fleet to face charges.

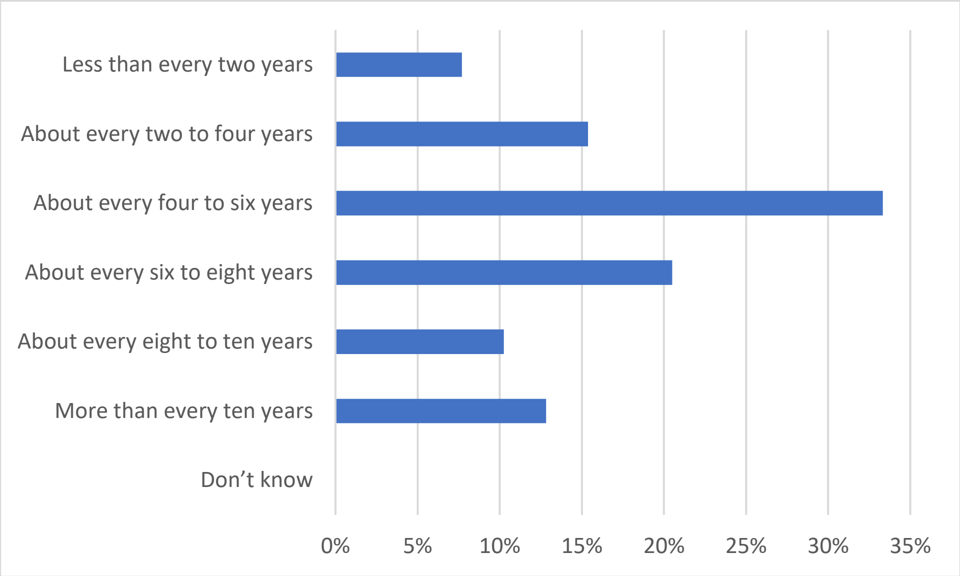
2.14 Proportion of Fleet That Would be Charged – Businesses with a Fleet (n=40)



Replacement of Business Vehicles

When asked how often vehicles are upgraded or replaced, a third of businesses said this happens around every four to six years and a fifth of businesses replace them every six to eight years.

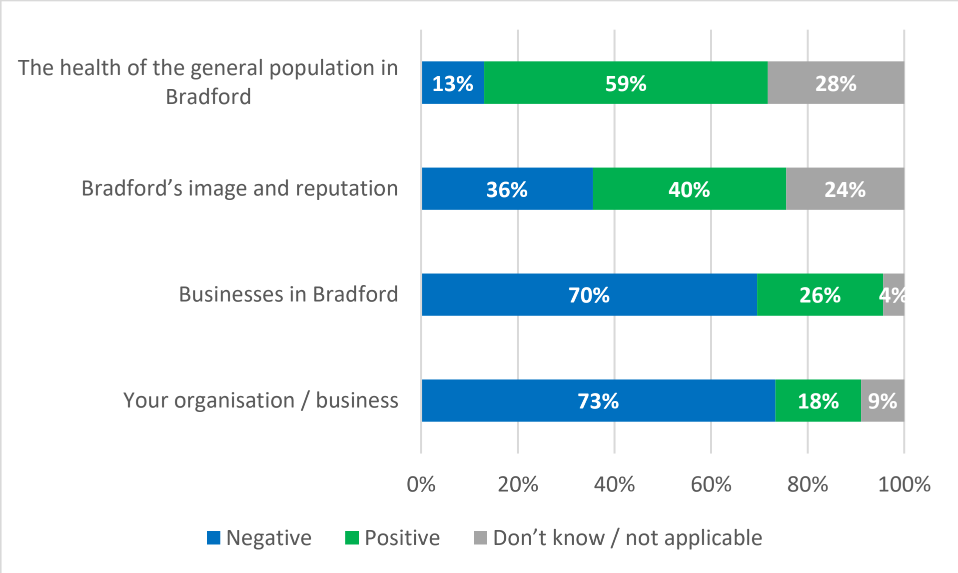
2.15 How Often Businesses Replace Vehicles – Businesses with a Fleet (n=39)



Effects of the Clean Air Zone

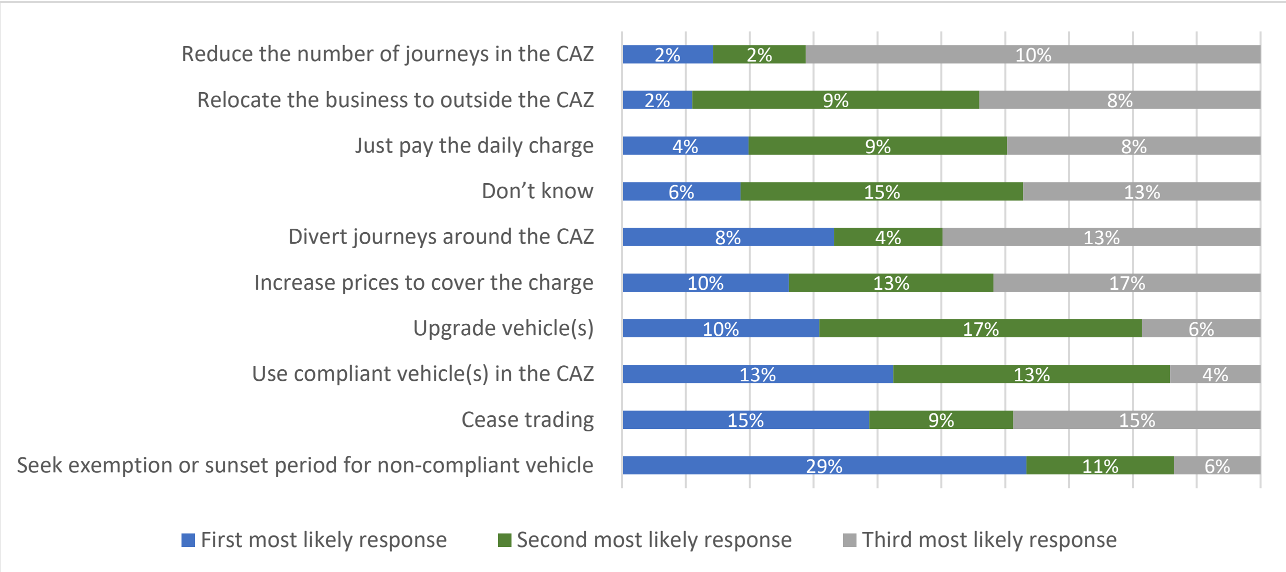
Views were sought on the overall impact on various aspects if the CAZ is introduced. Although three fifths of businesses with a fleet felt positively about the impact of the CAZ on the health of the general population, nearly three quarters felt negatively about the impact on their own organisation and 70% felt negatively about the impact on businesses in Bradford generally.

2.16 Overall Impact of Clean Air Zone – Businesses with a Fleet (n=46)



Businesses with a fleet were then asked how they are likely to respond if the charges are introduced and to rank their first to third most likely response from a range of options. The first most likely response selected by 29% of respondents will be to seek an exemption or sunset period, followed by cease trading (15%), then use compliant vehicles in the CAZ (13%). The same three responses featured highly as second most likely after the option to upgrade vehicles (17%).

2.17 Likely Responses to the Proposed CAZ Charges - Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)



2.6 Views on The Proposed Support Packages

The majority of responding businesses with a fleet (88%) feel that they will need some financial support if the CAZ is introduced, only 10% said they wouldn't, with the remaining 2% unsure.

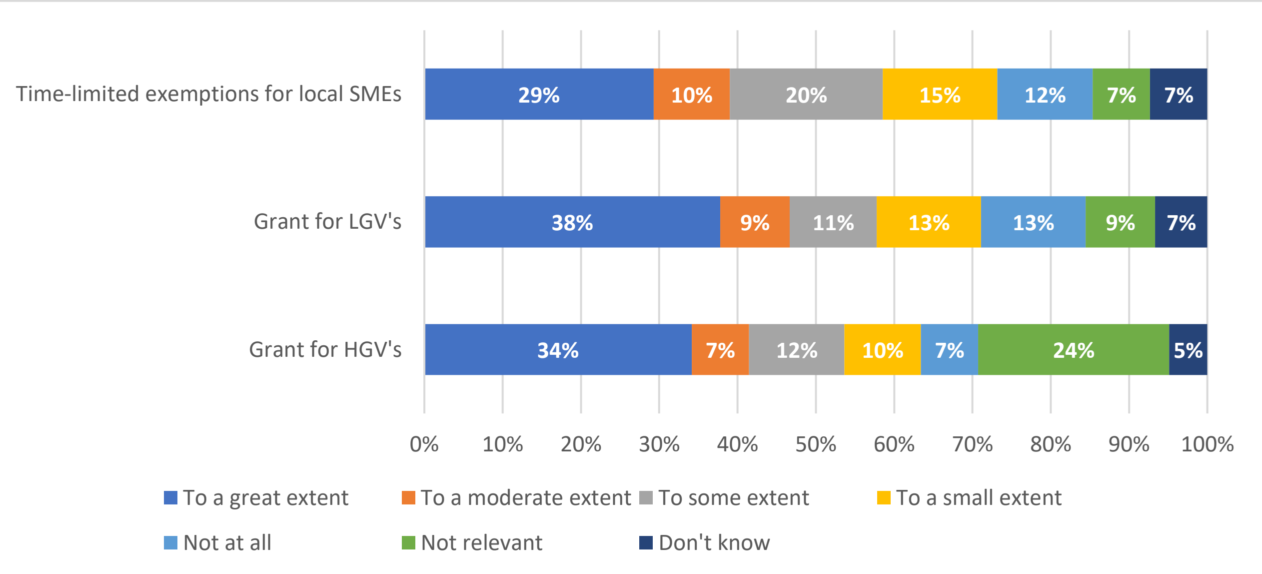
Suitability of the Support Packages

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they feel the proposed support packages would help them upgrade to a cleaner vehicle that would not be subject to the charge. They were asked to rank the following initiatives from being not at all helpful to being helpful to a great extent;

- For HGV's – up to £15,000 grant for upgrade or retrofit per vehicle
- For LGV's – up to £5,000 grant for upgrade or retrofit per vehicle
- Time-limited exemptions for local SMEs

Businesses felt most positively about the offer of a £5,000 grant for LGVs with nearly half (47%) saying it would help to either a great or moderate extent.

2.18 Extent to Which the Proposed Support Packages Would Help Them Upgrade Their Vehicle – Businesses with a Fleet (n= 45)

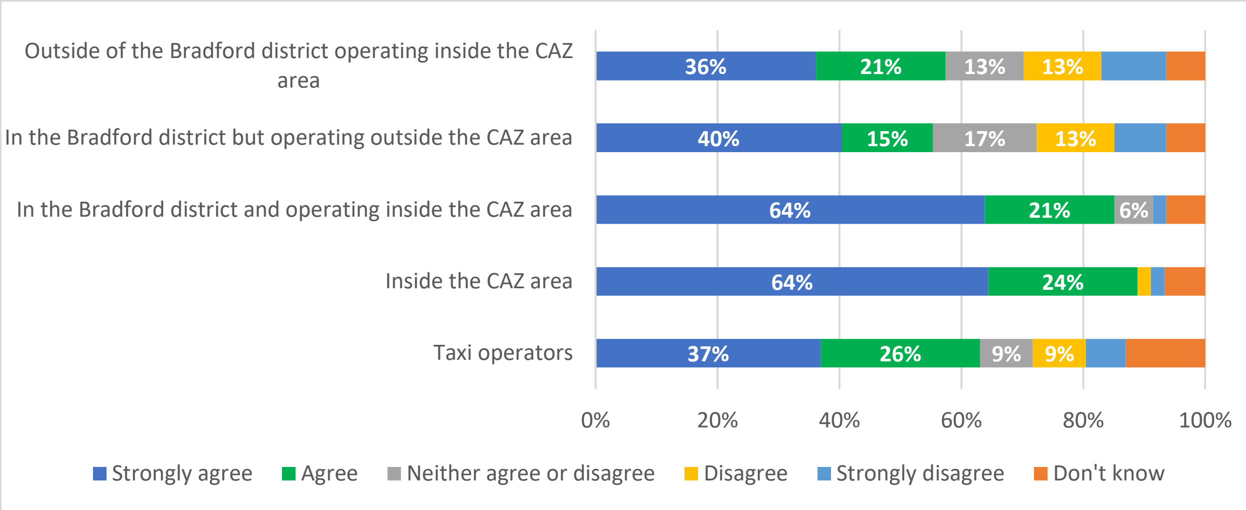


Provision of Financial Support

Businesses with a fleet were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with financial support being offered to businesses based on their location.

The results suggest that around two-thirds strongly agree with financial support being provided to business and organisations both in the district and operating within the CAZ and to those located in the CAZ. Smaller proportions, but still significant (between 36% -40%) felt strongly about help being provided to those located outside and/or not operating in the CAZ as well as taxi operators.

2.19 Agreement with Provision of Financial Support – Businesses with a Fleet (n=47)

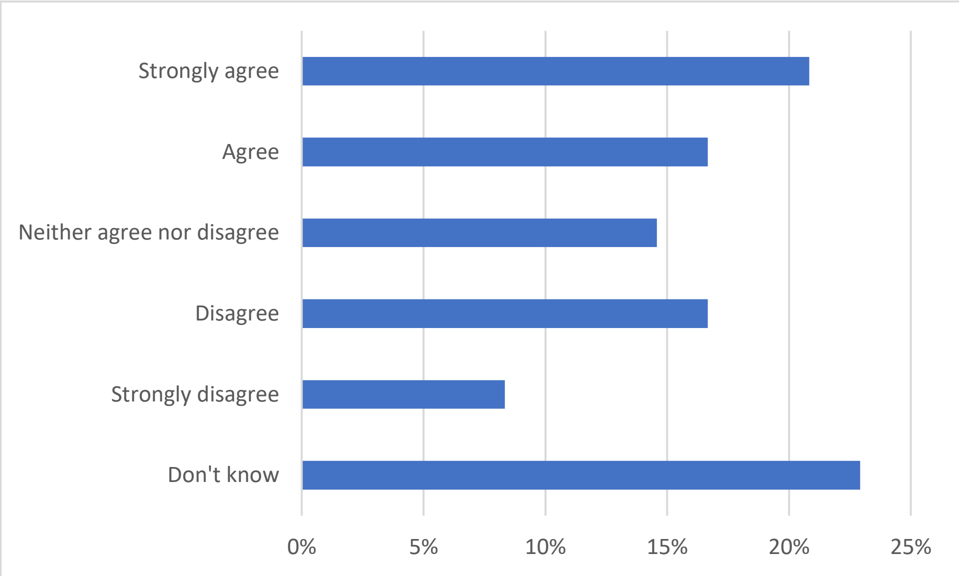


Alternative Energy Centre (AEC)

Several questions were asked about the introduction of an Alternative Energy Centre in Bradford. Respondents were advised that a scheme being considered is the establishment of "an Alternative Energy Centre at Bowling Back Lane which will be a community facility for sustainable fuels (that will) provide access to cost-effective fuels, including compresses natural gas, biomethane and hydrogen". More businesses with a fleet support the establishment of an AEC in Bradford (57%) than don't (28%).

When asked the extent to which they agree whether the centre will have a positive impact on Bradford's air quality, the most often selected response was 'Don't know' (23%), followed by 21% who strongly agree that it will.

2.20 Views on The Impact of a Proposed Alternative Energy Centre on Bradford's Air Quality – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)



When asked how likely their business would be to use the AEC, the results were generally negative. Just under half (46%) said they would be unlikely to use it compared to only 29% who said they would be likely to use it. The remaining quarter were unsure.

2.21 Likelihood of Using a Proposed Alternative Energy Centre – Businesses with a Fleet (n=48)

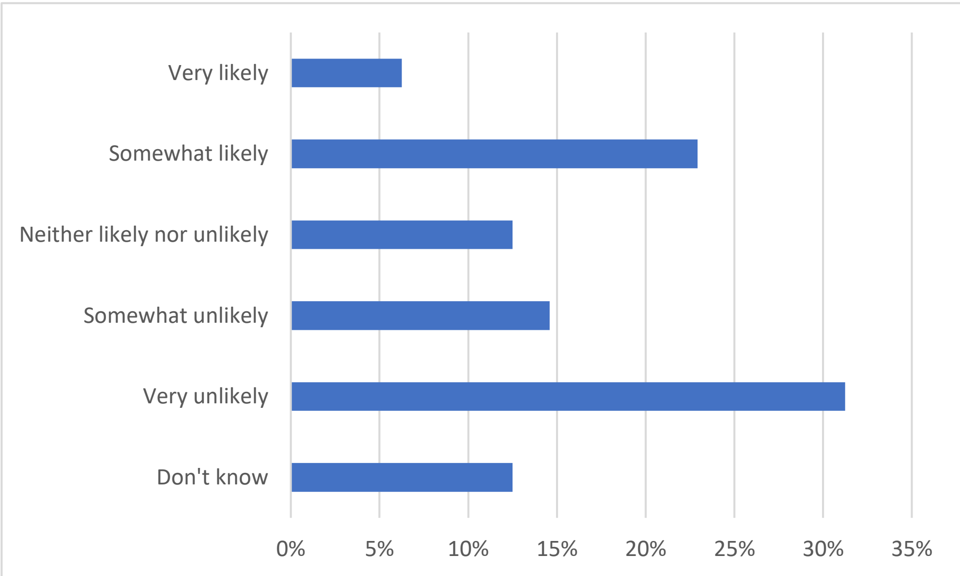


Figure 2.22 shows the number of businesses of each category of fleet size who responded that they would be very likely or somewhat likely to use the AEC.

2.22 Number of Businesses Either Very or Somewhat Likely to use the AEC – Businesses with Fleet

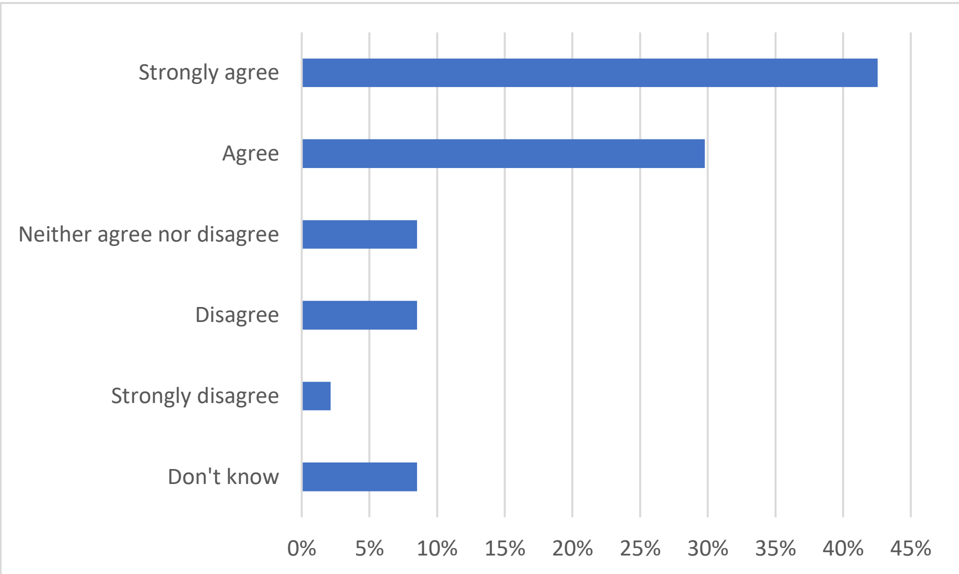
Size of Fleet	Very likely to use AEC	Somewhat likely to use AEC
1	0	3
2-10	2	5
11-20	0	0
21-30	0	2
31-40	0	0
41-50	0	0

Electric Bus Routes

The proposed introduction of full electric bus routes at some locations in the Bradford district were supported by over three quarters of businesses with a fleet (77%). Only 13% said they would not support them.

Over two fifths of respondents strongly agreed that electric bus routes would have a positive impact on air quality in Bradford and 30% agreed. Only 11% were not in agreement.

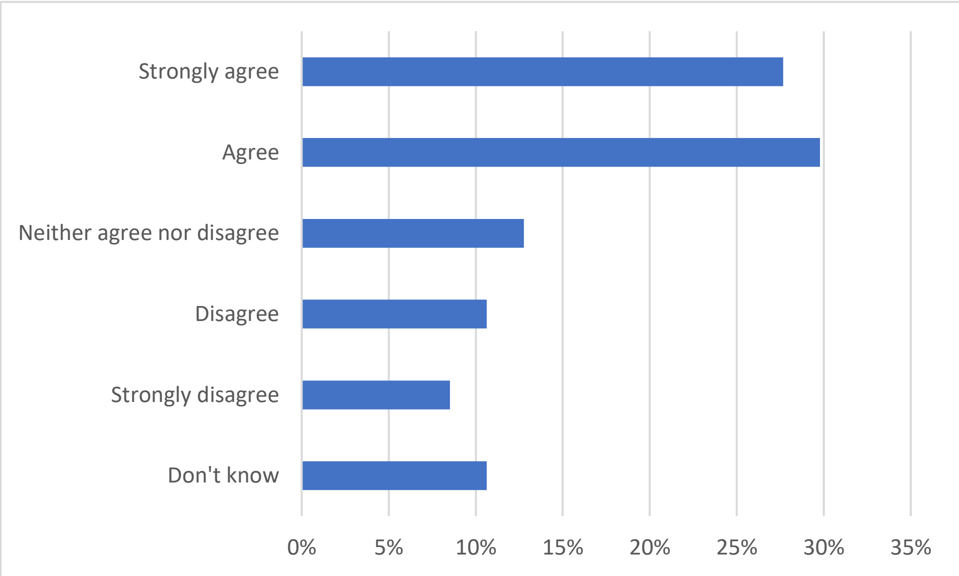
2.23 Views on The Impact of Electric Bus Routes on Bradford's Air Quality – Businesses with a Fleet (n=47)



Park and Ride

Respondents were given a brief description of a proposal to provide a 1,000 space park and ride site off the M606 at Euroway / Slaithgate Lane / Odsall providing a dedicated express busway into the city centre. Just under two thirds of businesses with a fleet were in support of this proposal and 23% were not. When asked whether the Park and Ride Scheme would have a positive impact on Bradford's air quality, a majority of 57% felt that it would and only 19% disagreed.

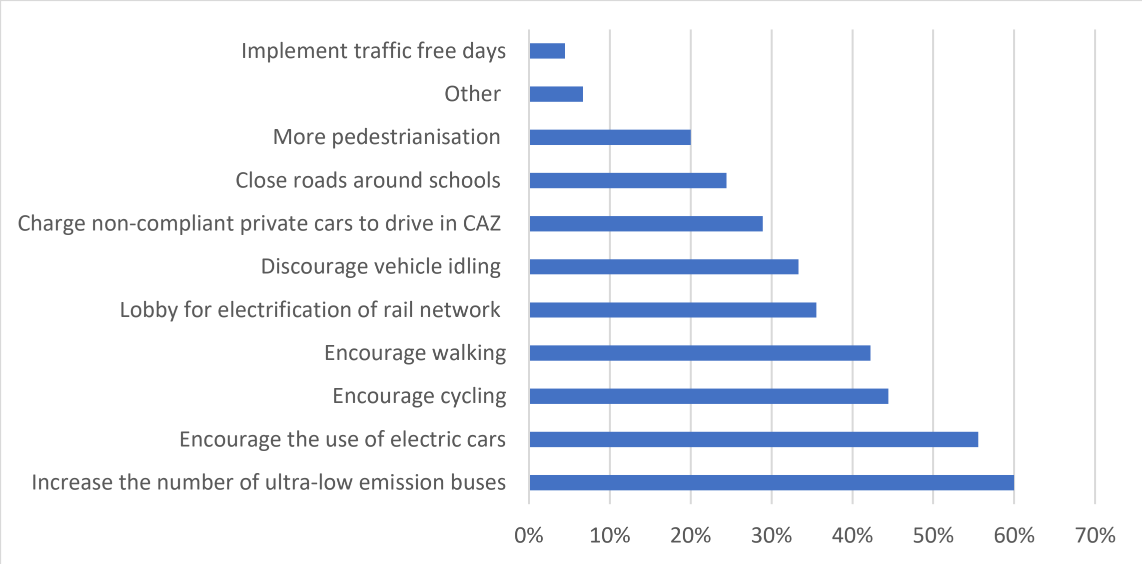
2.24 Views on the Impact of a Park and Ride Facility on Bradford's Air Quality – Businesses with a Fleet (n=47)



Actions to Improve Air Quality

Finally, Businesses with fleet were asked what other actions they think should be taken to improve air quality in the Bradford District. They were able to select any number of options from a list. The actions most frequently selected by businesses with fleet were to increase the number of ultra-low-emission buses (selected by 60% of businesses), encourage the use of electric private cars (56%) and encourage cycling (44%) and walking (42%).

2.25 Other Actions That Should Be Taken to Improve Air Quality – Businesses with a Fleet (n=45)



2.7 Views on What Additional Information Would Be Helpful

The vast majority of businesses with a fleet (74%) felt that this survey had enabled them to make informed comments about the CAZ proposals.

When asked what additional information would have helped them to make comments on the proposals, most respondents who provided a response used it as an opportunity to provide more general comments. Key points made by businesses with a fleet regarding the CAZ proposals were are summarised as:

- Worries that the CAZ will further the economic decline of Bradford City Centre;
- More interaction between the council and local businesses to both spread information about the plans and help implement them;
- Ensure businesses have the ability to put forward their case for an exemption;
- Fears businesses may have to make people redundant to be able to afford paying the CAZ charge and the cost of upgrading their vehicles;
- People feel the CAZ consultation wasn't promoted enough and the survey didn't give them enough opportunities for 'free choice' answers where they could greater detail opinions;
- Small businesses who use LGV's cannot afford to replace their vehicle with a compliant LGV. They say customers will not buy their services if they increase their fees to cover the CAZ charge, and worry that tradesmen who use a private car will be favoured; and

- Strong feeling that whilst private cars will not be charged, more work needs to be done to reduce the number of private cars on the road, especially those with just one occupant (more car sharing etc.).

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