Department for Infrastructure
An Roinn Bonneagair
Depairtment fur Infrastructure
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Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (ETCS) – Taxis in Bus Lanes, Belfast City Centre in the vicinity of Belfast Grand Central Station (BGCS)

Public Citizen Space

Consultation Responses Report: ETCS

18 March 2026 to 10 June 2026

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Section 1: Overview

In 2024 Minister O'Dowd, during his time in office, requested that all classes of taxis be permitted to use bus lanes in and around Belfast City Centre for the duration of the roadworks associated with Belfast Grand Central Station (BGCS), in response to increasing traffic congestion.

The Department initially proposed introducing an Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (ETCS) under Article 5 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. The proposed scheme would allow all taxis (Class A, B, C and Class D) to use specified bus lanes, while also providing an opportunity to gather data to inform future policy development. The findings of a previous 12-week trial undertaken in 2017 were considered inconclusive.

However, given the urgency of addressing congestion in the area, the Department decided to introduce the arrangements temporarily under Article 7 of the 1997 Order, pending the introduction of a formal ETCS. A Temporary Traffic Regulation (TTR) was made on 17 December 2024 and came into operation on 18 December 2024, allowing specified bus lanes to be used by all taxis. The TTR was subsequently advertised on 13 January 2025 and remained in place until the introduction of the ETCS.

Bus lanes are generally introduced through a Traffic Regulation Order made under Article 4 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. In some cases, temporary bus lane arrangements may be introduced under Article 7. Motorway bus lanes are introduced separately through Motorway Regulations.

There are four classes of taxi operating in Northern Ireland: Class A, Class B, Class C and Class D. The class of taxi determines the services it may provide. Further information on taxi classifications is available on the nidirect website:

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/taxis-and-their-services

Prior to the introduction of the ETCS, the following classes of taxi were permitted to use bus lanes where the accompanying traffic sign displayed the legend "Permitted Taxi":

- Class B wheelchair-accessible taxis; and
- Class D taxis.

On 8 September 2025, an Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (ETCS) was introduced, permitting Class A, B, C and D taxis, on a trial basis, to use the following bus lanes:

Inbound towards Belfast City Centre

- Shaftesbury Square
- Great Victoria Street (Shaftesbury Square to Grosvenor Road)

Outbound from Belfast City Centre

- Great Victoria Street (Howard Street to Bruce Street)
- Bruce Street
- Dublin Road

The operational hours of these bus lanes remain unchanged and continue to apply as indicated on the adjacent traffic signs.

The Department publicised its intention to introduce the ETCS on 13 January 2025 and undertook a public consultation between 14 January and 5 February 2025. A report on that consultation is available at:

https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/experimental-traffic-control-scheme-taxis-bus-lanes-belfast-city-centre-2025

The ETCS initially operated from 8 September 2025 for six months. The Department subsequently extended the scheme to conclude in early January 2027. An ETCS may remain in force for up to 18 months in total.

Throughout the trial period, the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) will assess the impact of permitting additional classes of taxi to use the bus lanes. This assessment

will include consideration of road safety, bus journey times, traffic volumes and vehicle speeds.

DfI is also seeking views on the operation of the ETCS and the potential future use of bus lanes by taxis. This consultation is intended to gather those views and assist the Department in determining the long-term arrangements for taxi access to bus lanes.

Following completion of the consultation and analysis of all available data, the Department will publish its findings on the DfI website.

Section 2: The Consultation Process

The public consultation was launched on 18 March 2026 and remained open for a period of 12 weeks, closing on 10 June 2026. It was hosted on the Citizen Space platform and was accessible via the Department for Infrastructure's website, providing an open and transparent mechanism for public engagement. Citizen Space is the Northern Ireland Civil Service's recommended platform for public consultations, ensuring consistency with established digital engagement standards.

The objective of the consultation was to gather views on the Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (ETCS), which permits all classes of taxi to use designated bus lanes in the vicinity of Belfast Grand Central Station. Feedback was received from a range of stakeholders, including taxi operators, public transport users, businesses and local residents. Responses highlighted both the potential benefits of improved accessibility and connectivity to the station, as well as concerns relating to traffic management, bus journey reliability and road safety. The feedback received has been reviewed and analysed to inform the ongoing assessment of the scheme and will be taken into account when evaluating its effectiveness and determining future policy development.

The following stakeholder organisations were informed via email of the survey and encouraged to participate:

1. Translink, IMTAC and other bus operators
2. Walk Wheel Cycle (formerly Sustrans) and Cycling UK
3. Belfast City Council
4. The Committee for Infrastructure
5. Motorcycle Action Group and Road Safety Forum partners, including the emergency services
6. Taxi operators

Information on the consultation was also made available on the Department's website. Stakeholders and members of the public were invited to respond either through Citizen Space via the consultation webpage or by email to a dedicated mailbox at RoadsEngineeringServices@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk.

Section 3: The Consultation Responses

A total of 811 responses were received through the Citizen Space survey. Respondents were not required to answer every question and, as a result, the number of responses varies across individual questions. The total number of responses received for each question is reported alongside the results. For consistency, the figures and percentages presented in this report have been calculated using the total number of survey respondents (811) as the denominator, rather than the number of respondents who answered each individual question.

Due to the volume of comments provided in the seven free text boxes in the survey responses, the consultation responses have been analysed in two ways.

• The survey responses have been analysed quantitatively. The results are shown in the figures and tables below.

• The free text responses and written comments have been analysed qualitatively.

Each comment was given one or more codes which correlated to a high-level description of its content. This process was then used to draw out the key themes raised in the consultees' responses and identify areas of commonality.

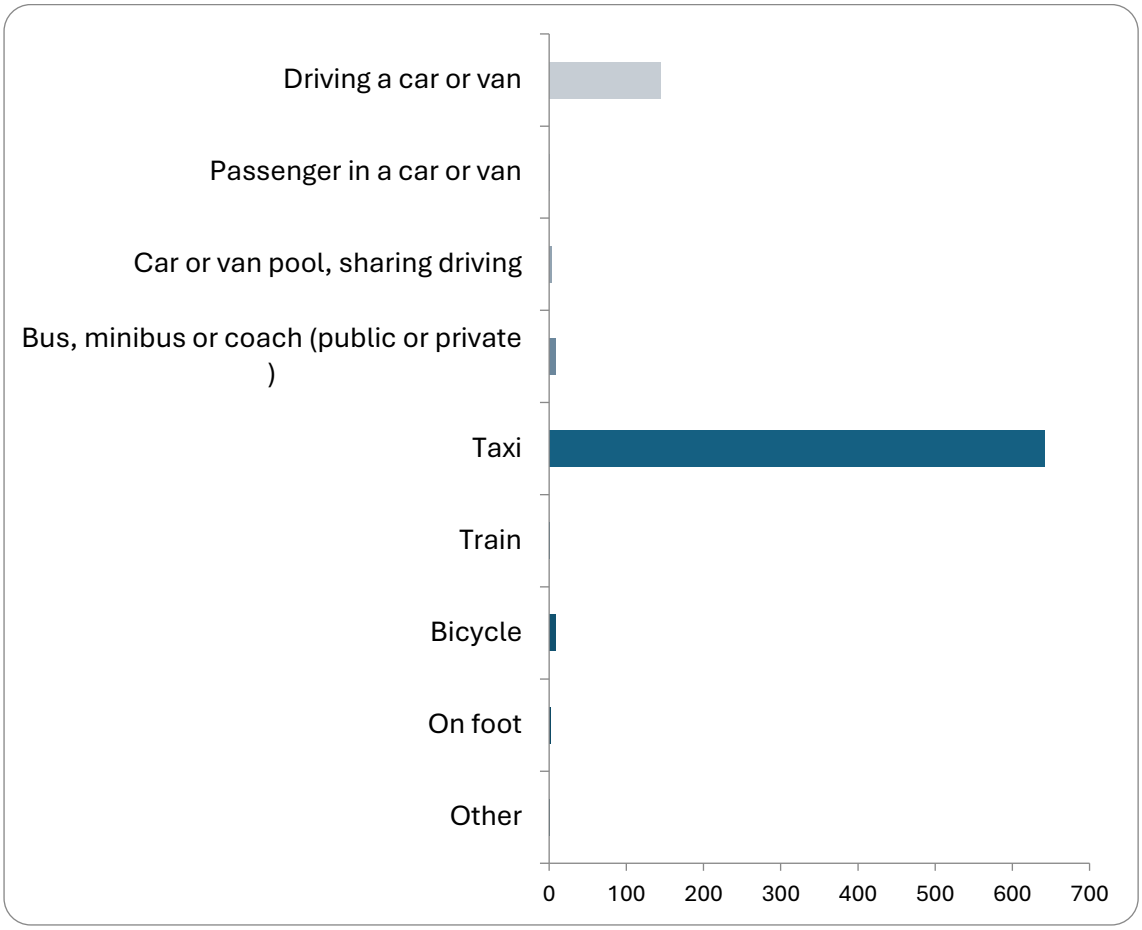
Section 4: Analysis of Responses

Questions:

1: What is your main mode of transport for your regular journeys (eg to work, study or recreational activities)

Main mode

There were 811 responses to this part of the question.



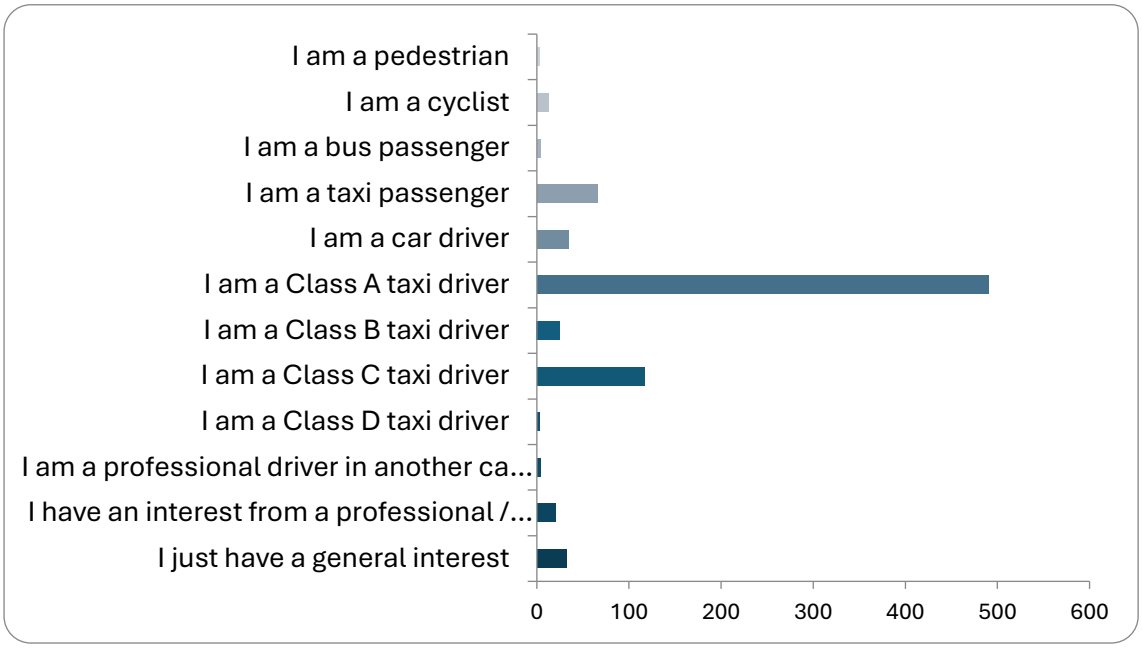
Option	Total	Percent
Driving a car or van	145	17.88%
Passenger in a car or van	1	0.12%
Car or van pool, sharing driving	3	0.37%
Bus, minibus or coach (public or private)	8	0.99%
Taxi	642	79.16%
Train	1	0.12%
Motorcycle, scooter or moped	0	0.00%
Bicycle	8	0.99%
On foot	2	0.25%
Other	1	0.12%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- Respondents were predominantly from the taxi industry, accounting for 79% of all responses. A further 18% identified themselves as car or van drivers.

2: What is your primary concern or interest regarding taxis being permitted in bus lanes?

Main interest

There were 811 responses to this part of the question.



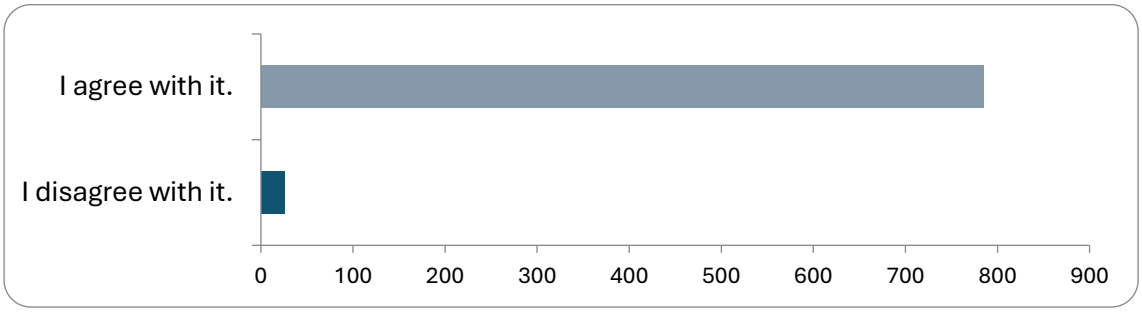
Option	Total	Percent
I am a pedestrian	3	0.37%
I am a cyclist	13	1.60%
I am a bus passenger	4	0.49%
I am a motorcyclist	0	0.00%
I am a taxi passenger	66	8.14%
I am a car driver	34	4.19%
I am a Class A taxi driver	490	60.42%
I am a Class B taxi driver	25	3.08%
I am a Class C taxi driver	117	14.43%
I am a Class D taxi driver	3	0.37%
I am a professional driver in another capacity	4	0.49%
I have an interest from a professional / organisational perspective	20	2.47%
I just have a general interest	32	3.95%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- The taxi industry represented 78% of all survey responses. Class A and Class C taxis accounted for 60% and 14% of responses respectively, despite these vehicle classes not normally being permitted access to bus lanes.

3: What is your viewpoint with taxis using bus lanes?

Bus lanes agree or disagree

There were 811 responses to this part of the question.



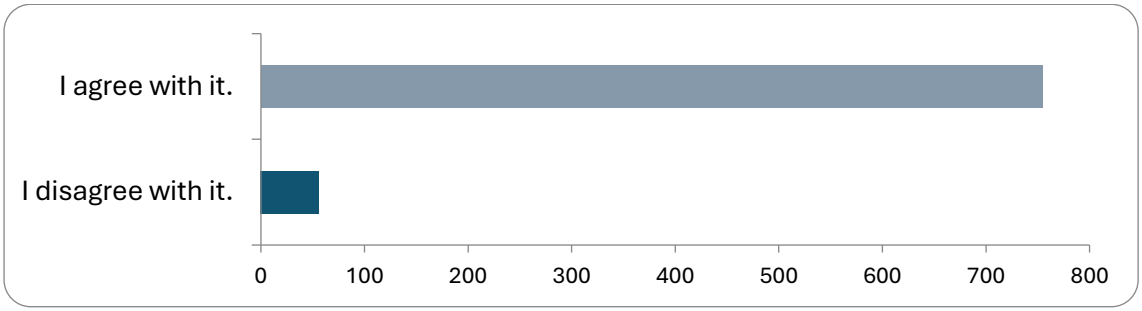
Option	Total	Percent
I agree with it.	785	96.79%
I disagree with it.	26	3.21%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- Nearly 97% agree with the taxis using bus lanes.

4: What is your viewpoint on the current scheme that allows all taxis to use certain bus lanes?

Viewpoint

There were 811 responses to this part of the question.



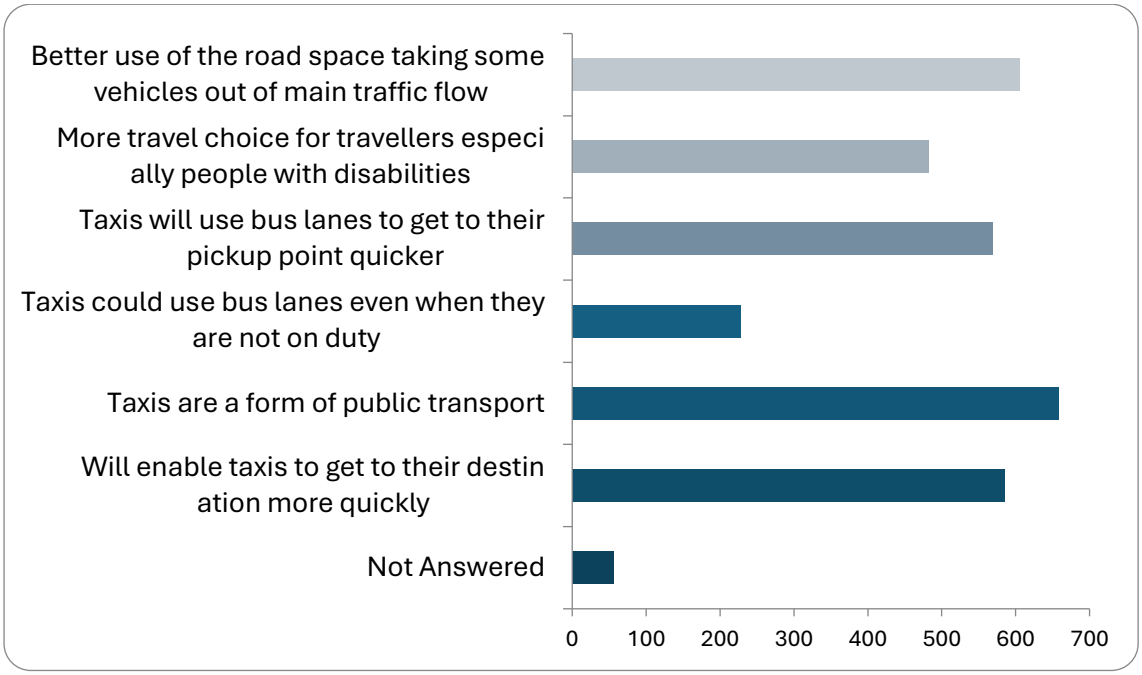
Option	Total	Percent
I agree with it.	755	93.09%
I disagree with it.	56	6.91%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- Over 93% support the current scheme permitting taxis into the bus lanes, while nearly 7% disagree with it.

5: What are the main factors that influence your viewpoint of the ETCS and the additional taxis in the bus lanes? Pick all that apply.

Main factors

There were 755 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Better use of the road space taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow	606	74.72%
More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities	483	59.56%
Taxis will use bus lanes to get to their pickup point quicker	569	70.16%
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	228	28.11%
Taxis are a form of public transport	658	81.13%
Will enable taxis to get to their destination more quickly	585	72.13%
Not Answered	56	6.91%

- 755 respondents (93%) answered this question. The respondents were able to select more than one answer.
- There is strong support for the view that taxis are a form of public transport, with over 81% of respondents agreeing.
- Nearly 75% of respondents believe that permitting taxis to use bus lanes would be a more efficient use of available road space.
- More than 72% believe that access to bus lanes would reduce taxi journey times.
- Notably, 28% of respondents believe taxis should be allowed to use bus lanes regardless of whether they are carrying passengers.

Further details or suggestions provided by respondents are outlined below:

A total of 267 respondents used the free-text box to provide comments in relation to Question 5. Based on the responses received, there was overwhelming support for allowing additional taxis, particularly Class A and Class C taxis, to access bus lanes. There were very few neutral responses and almost no direct opposition within the replies. Many responses appeared to have been submitted by taxi drivers or representatives of the taxi industry, and a number contained near-identical wording.

The key reasons cited in support of the proposal included:

- reduced journey times,
- lower passenger fares,
- reduced congestion,
- improved accessibility for elderly and disabled passengers, and
- recognition of taxis as part of the wider public transport network.
- consistency of the proposal with arrangements already operating in other cities across the UK and Ireland.

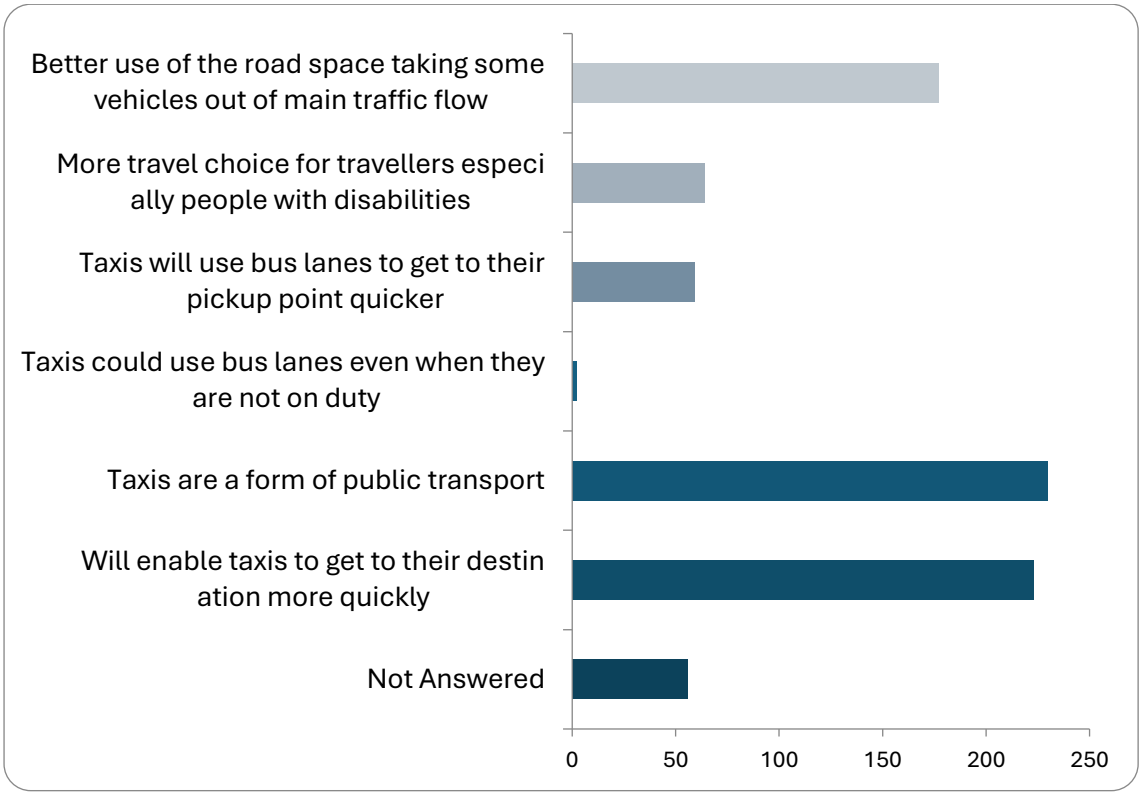
A smaller number of responses raised practical considerations:

- enforcement arrangements,
- bus lane operating hours, and
- wider traffic management measures.

6: What is the most important factor that influences your viewpoint of the ETCS and the additional taxis in the bus lanes? Please choose one.

Most important if agree

There were 755 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Better use of the road space taking some vehicles out of main traffic flow	177	21.82%
More travel choice for travellers especially people with disabilities	64	7.89%
Taxis will use bus lanes to get to their pickup point quicker	59	7.27%
Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	2	0.25%
Taxis are a form of public transport	230	28.36%
Will enable taxis to get to their destination more quickly	223	27.50%
Not Answered	56	6.91%

- 755 respondents (93%) answered this question.
- More than 28% of respondents consider taxis to be a form of public transport.
- Almost 28% believe that access to bus lanes would improve journey times for taxis.

- Support for allowing taxis to use bus lanes when not in service was very limited, with only 0.25% of respondents expressing this view.

Further details or suggestions provided by respondents are outlined below:

A total of 113 respondents used the free-text box to provide comments in relation to Question 6.

Analysis of the free-text responses indicates that the principal factor influencing support for the ETCS and additional taxi access to bus lanes was the perception that these measures would enable quicker and more reliable journeys for passengers.

Respondents frequently linked this to:

- reduced fare costs;
- improved punctuality; and
- greater service reliability.

Other prominent themes included:

- recognition of taxis as part of the public transport network;
- accessibility benefits for elderly and disabled passengers; and
- improved traffic flow and increased operational efficiency within the taxi sector.

A smaller number of responses highlighted:

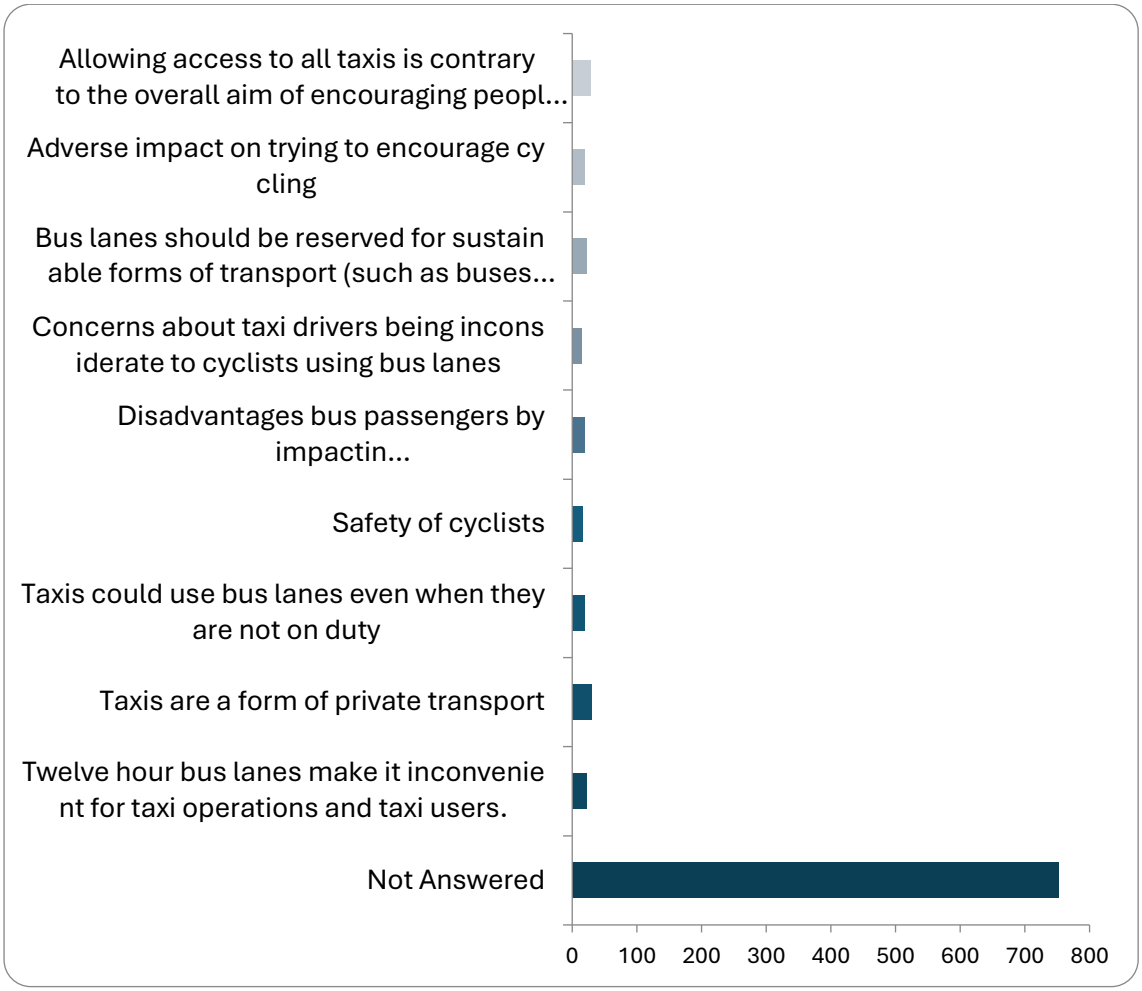
- environmental benefits;
- potential impacts on tourism; and
- a desire for equal treatment across taxi classes.

Very few responses expressed opposition to the proposals.

7: What are the main factors that influence your viewpoint of the ETCS and the additional taxis in the bus lanes? Pick all that apply.

Main factors

There were 58 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Allowing access to all taxis is contrary to the overall aim of encouraging people to adopt more active and sustainable modes of transport	28	3.45%
Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling	20	2.47%
Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)	23	2.84%
Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes	15	1.85%
Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times	19	2.34%
Safety of cyclists	17	2.10%

Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	19	2.34%
Taxis are a form of private transport	30	3.70%
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users.	23	2.84%
Not Answered	753	92.85%

- A significant majority (93%) of the 811 respondents did not provide a response to this multiple-choice question.
- 30 respondents identified taxis as a form of public transport.
- 23 respondents felt that bus lanes should remain reserved for sustainable transport modes, including buses and bicycles.
- 23 respondents considered the current 12-hour bus lane restrictions to be inconvenient for taxi operators and their customers.
- Cyclist safety was highlighted by 17 respondents.
- 15 respondents raised concerns regarding the behaviour of taxi drivers in bus lanes and the potential impact on cyclists.

Further details or suggestions provided by respondents are outlined below:

There were 28 responses to this question.

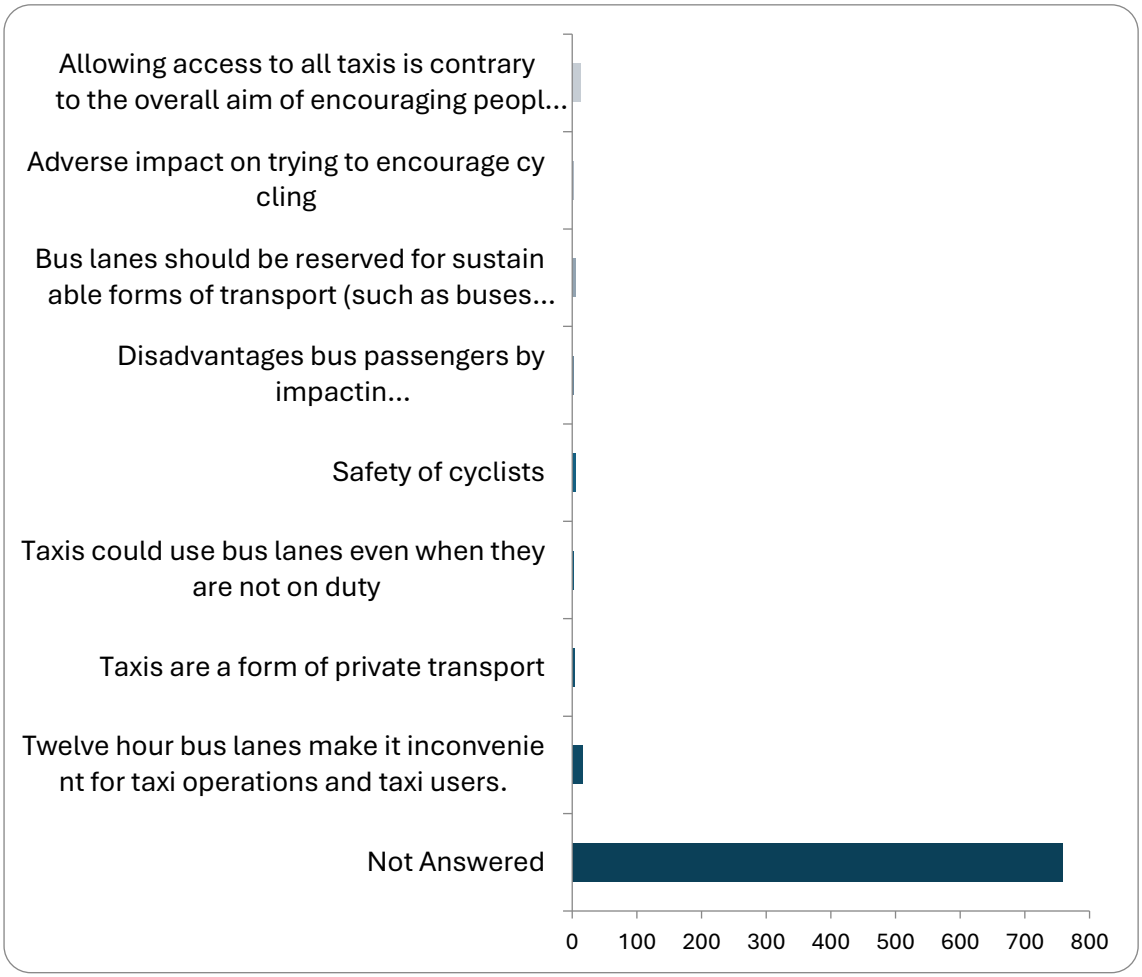
The responses are heavily polarised. While there are relatively few substantive comments compared with the number of non-responses, those who did respond expressed strong views. Two clear stakeholder groups emerge:

1. Supporters of expanded taxi access to bus lanes, primarily taxi drivers and taxi users.
2. Opponents of expanded taxi access, primarily cyclists, public transport advocates and active travel supporters.

The responses do not indicate a clear consensus. Instead, they reflect a division between those viewing taxis as an integral part of the public transport network deserving greater priority, and those who believe bus lanes should remain focused on buses, cycling and sustainable transport objectives. The most significant concerns raised by opponents relate to cyclist safety and maintaining bus journey reliability, while the strongest supportive arguments relate to improved mobility, accessibility and network efficiency.

8: What is the most important factor that influences your viewpoint of the ETCS and the additional taxis in the bus lanes? Please choose one.

There were 52 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Allowing access to all taxis is contrary to the overall aim of encouraging people to adopt more active and sustainable modes of transport	13	1.60%
Adverse impact on trying to encourage cycling	2	0.25%
Bus lanes should be reserved for sustainable forms of transport (such as buses and bicycles)	6	0.74%
Concerns about taxi drivers being inconsiderate to cyclists using bus lanes	0	0.00%
Disadvantages bus passengers by impacting on bus speeds and journey times	2	0.25%
Safety of cyclists	5	0.62%

Taxis could use bus lanes even when they are not on duty	3	0.37%
Taxis are a form of private transport	4	0.49%
Twelve hour bus lanes make it inconvenient for taxi operations and taxi users.	17	2.10%
Not Answered	759	93.59%

- A significant majority of respondents (only 52 of the 811 survey participants) did not provide a response to this question.
- 17 respondents identified twelve-hour bus lanes as an inconvenience for both taxi operators and taxi users.
- No respondents expressed concern about taxi drivers being inconsiderate towards cyclists using bus lanes.

Further details or suggestions provided by respondents are outlined below:

There were 7 responses to this part of the question reflecting a very small number of respondents.

The limited responses reveal mixed opinions, although the majority of comments received were supportive of allowing additional taxis to use bus lanes. Supporters cited improved journey times, reduced congestion, recognition of taxis as public-service transport providers, and consistency with practices in other cities. A smaller number of respondents raised objections, focusing primarily on road safety concerns, particularly the potential impact on cyclists and the effectiveness of bus lanes due to increased taxi movements.

Overall, the responses suggest that while there is support among some respondents for expanding taxi access to bus lanes, concerns remain regarding the potential safety implications and the effect on existing bus lane users.

9: Please share any additional factors you think are relevant to allowing all taxis in bus lanes in the box below: -

There were 433 responses to this part of the question.

The responses were overwhelmingly supportive of allowing taxis to use bus lanes, with only a relatively small number of responses expressing opposition or caution. Many submissions appeared to originate from taxi drivers or those connected to the taxi industry, resulting in recurring themes relating to operational efficiency, fairness between taxi classes, and benefits to customers.

Theme 1: Taxis as Public Transport

This was the most frequently cited theme.

Many respondents argued that taxis form an integral part of the public transport network and should therefore be afforded similar access rights to buses. Respondents frequently described taxis as public service vehicles that transport members of the public, including vulnerable users and those without access to private cars.

Key points raised:

- Taxis are a form of public transport.
- Taxis complement buses and rail services.
- Taxis provide essential door-to-door transport.
- Public transport users should be free to choose between bus and taxi services.

Theme 2: Reduced Congestion and Improved Traffic Flow

A significant proportion of responses stated that allowing taxis into bus lanes would improve overall traffic conditions.

Respondents suggested that:

- Removing taxis from general traffic lanes would reduce congestion.
- Traffic would flow more efficiently.
- Existing bus lanes are often underutilised.
- Current city centre traffic management arrangements have worsened congestion.

Many respondents specifically referenced congestion associated with recent city centre traffic changes and road layout alterations.

Key points raised

- Reduced congestion in general traffic lanes.
- Better use of available road space.
- Faster movement throughout Belfast.
- Relief of bottlenecks at key locations.

Theme 3: Faster Journey Times and Lower Costs for Passengers

Many comments focused on the customer benefits of bus lane access.

Respondents noted that:

- Passengers are charged while vehicles sit in traffic.
- Faster journeys would reduce fares.
- Journey reliability would improve.
- Taxis could provide a more attractive transport option.

Key points raised

- Reduced waiting time.
- Lower metered fares.
- Improved customer satisfaction.
- Quicker access to workplaces, schools and appointments.

Theme 4: Accessibility and Benefits for Elderly and Disabled Passengers

A prominent theme throughout the responses concerned accessibility.

Many respondents highlighted the importance of taxis for:

- Elderly people.
- Disabled people.
- Mobility-impaired passengers.
- Hospital and healthcare appointments.

Several respondents argued that many users cannot easily access traditional public transport and depend on taxis for door-to-door travel.

Key points raised

- Improved mobility for vulnerable groups.
- Easier access to hospitals and healthcare.
- Reduced walking distances.
- Support for inclusive transport options.

Theme 5: Equality Between Taxi Classes

One of the most frequently recurring themes concerned perceived inconsistency in the current arrangements.

Many respondents questioned why some taxi classes can access bus lanes while others cannot.

Common arguments included:

- All taxi drivers hold similar licences.
- All taxis transport paying passengers.
- Different treatment creates unfair competition.
- Customers receive different levels of service depending on taxi class.

Key points raised

- Fairness across taxi classes.
- Consistent treatment of licensed operators.
- Elimination of perceived competitive advantages.

Theme 6: Positive Experience of the Existing Trial/Scheme

Many respondents referenced their experience of the experimental arrangements.

Common observations included:

- No noticeable delays to buses.
- Improved movement around the city.
- Better service provision.
- No observed safety issues.

Several comments stated that they had not witnessed incidents involving taxis, cyclists or pedestrians during the trial period.

Key points raised

- The scheme is perceived as successful.
- Limited evidence of adverse impacts.
- Improved operational efficiency.

Theme 7: Tourism, Visitors and Economic Benefits

A number of responses highlighted Belfast's growing tourism sector.

Respondents argued that:

- Visitors expect taxis to use bus lanes.
- Faster transport improves visitor experience.

- Better transport supports the local economy.
- Belfast should align with practices elsewhere.

Key points raised

- Enhanced visitor experience.
- Improved connectivity with transport hubs.
- Support for economic activity.

Theme 8: Environmental Benefits

Many respondents suggested environmental advantages.

Arguments included:

- Less idling in traffic.
- Lower fuel consumption.
- Reduced emissions.
- Encouragement of people to leave private cars at home.

Key points raised

- Reduced vehicle emissions.
- More efficient vehicle movements.
- Potential modal shift away from private car use.

Theme 9: Alignment with Other Cities

Many respondents compared Belfast with:

- Dublin.
- Other UK cities.
- European cities.

Respondents frequently stated that taxi access to bus lanes is commonplace elsewhere and viewed Belfast as being out of step with other jurisdictions.

Key points raised

- Desire for policy consistency.
- Examples from other cities.
- Modernisation of transport arrangements.

Theme 10: Safety Concerns and Objections

Although relatively limited in number, a minority of responses raised concerns.

These respondents argued that:

- Bus lanes should prioritise buses and active travel.
- Additional taxis may affect cyclists.
- Bus lanes should not be used to increase private sector profits.
- Taxi access could undermine sustainable transport objectives.

Some respondents also expressed concerns regarding:

- Wheelchair-accessible taxi incentives.
- Increased equality concerns.
- Potential impacts on active travel infrastructure.

Key points raised

- Cyclist safety.
- Protection of sustainable transport objectives.
- Fairness to other road users.
- Maintaining incentives for accessible vehicle provision.

The responses demonstrate strong overall support for allowing wider taxi access to bus lanes, particularly among respondents connected to the taxi sector and regular taxi users. The most common themes related to taxis being considered part of the public transport network, reducing congestion, improving journey times, lowering passenger costs, and improving accessibility for elderly and disabled users. There was also substantial support for applying any permissions consistently across all taxi classes, with many respondents viewing the current arrangements as inequitable.

Many respondents reported positive experiences of the existing experimental scheme and stated that they had observed no significant adverse impacts on bus services or road safety. Additional support centred on perceived economic, tourism and environmental benefits, as well as bringing Belfast into line with practices elsewhere in the UK, Ireland and Europe.

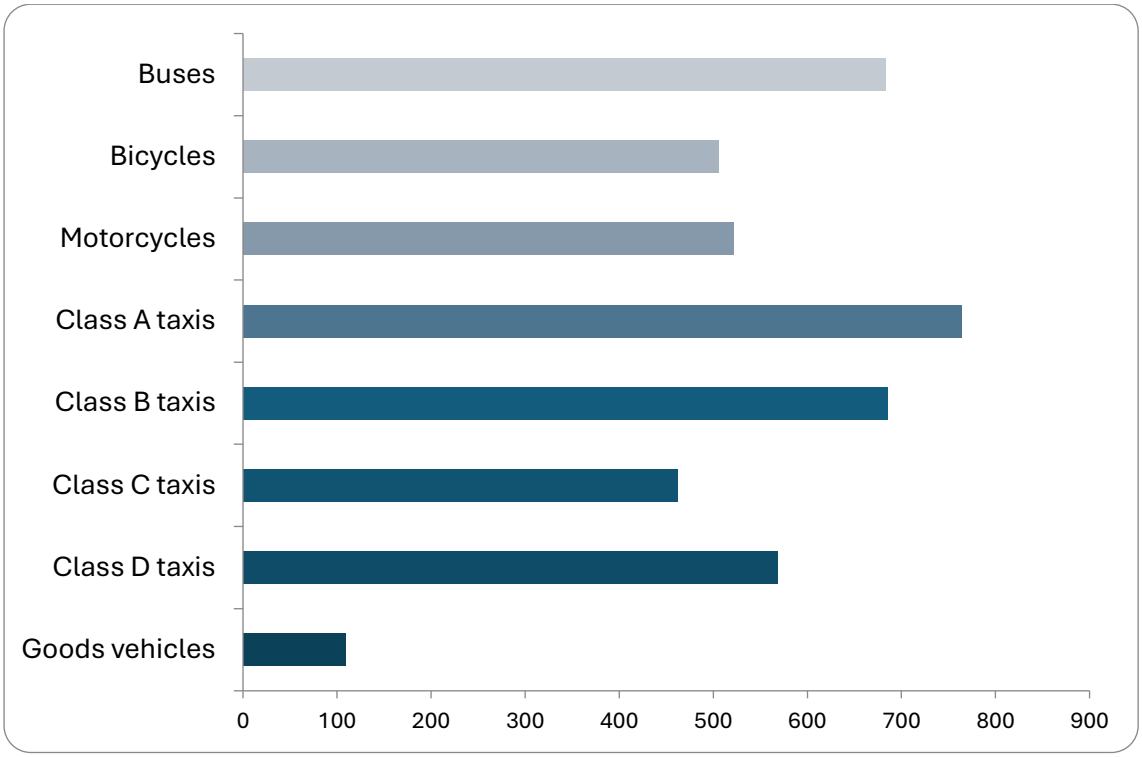
A smaller number of respondents objected to wider taxi access, primarily citing concerns regarding cyclist safety, the prioritisation of sustainable and active travel modes, and the potential dilution of the purpose of bus lanes. Some respondents also highlighted concerns about retaining incentives for wheelchair-accessible vehicles and ensuring fair allocation of limited road space.

Overall, the responses indicate that support for extended taxi access to bus lanes substantially outweighs opposition within this question, with respondents most frequently identifying congestion reduction, improved passenger service, accessibility benefits and fairness between taxi classes as the key reasons for expansion.

10: Thinking about the longer term, what forms of transport should be allowed to use bus lanes in future? Pick all that apply.

Forms of transport

There were 811 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Buses	683	84.22%
Bicycles	506	62.39%
Motorcycles	521	64.24%
Class A taxis	764	94.20%
Class B taxis	685	84.46%
Class C taxis	462	56.97%
Class D taxis	568	70.04%
Goods vehicles	109	13.44%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

- This was a multiple response question, and over 94% of respondents indicated that Class A taxis should be permitted to use bus lanes.
- Buses, bicycles, Class B and D taxis are currently permitted to use bus lanes outside of the ETCS.
- Nearly 57% of respondents were in favour of permitting Class C taxis to use bus lanes.
- Percentages do not sum to 100% as respondents could select more than one response.

Please list any other forms of transport or type of users you feel should be allowed to use bus lanes in the box below: -

There were 107 responses to this question. They were more varied than previous questions and reflected differing views on the future purpose of bus lanes. While many respondents supported wider access for taxis and other public-service vehicles, others emphasised that bus lanes should remain focused on moving people efficiently and safely through the transport network. A number of responses also discussed the role of cyclists, goods vehicles, emergency services, and different taxi classes.

The responses indicate that participants generally believe bus lanes should continue to be used primarily by vehicles that support the efficient movement of people through the transport network. The dominant view was that bus lanes should prioritise public transport and other transport options that provide a public service while maintaining safety for all road users.

There was substantial support for continued or expanded taxi access, with many respondents viewing taxis as an integral component of the public transport system. Emergency service vehicles also attracted near-universal support for continued access.

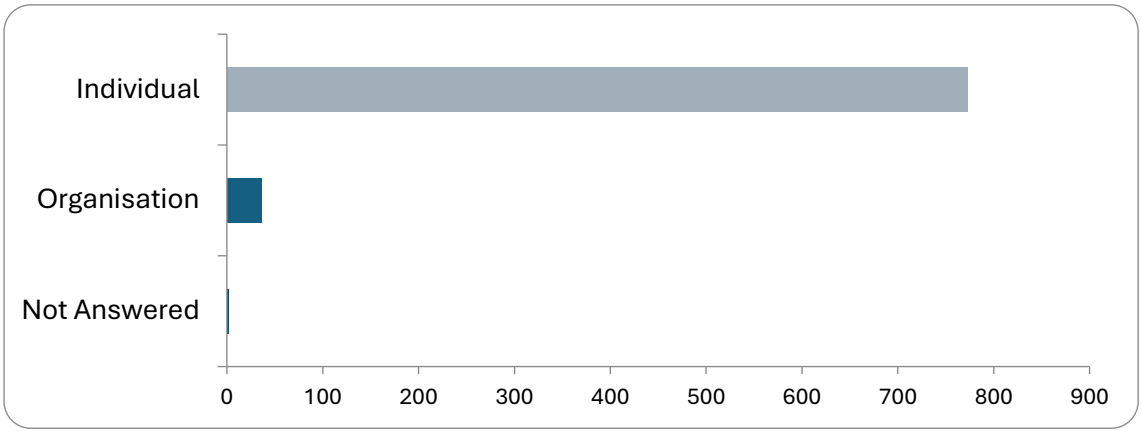
The principal areas of disagreement related to Class C taxis, goods vehicles and the role of cyclists. Concerns focused on vehicle identification, enforcement, safety, and the potential for bus lanes to become less effective if access were extended too widely. Many respondents therefore favoured a balanced approach that prioritises public transport, maintains road safety, and ensures bus lanes continue to fulfil their intended purpose of moving people efficiently and reliably.

Overall, the responses suggest broad support for maintaining bus lanes as a transport priority measure, with the strongest support directed towards buses, taxis and emergency service vehicles, while there was noticeably less support for extending access to goods vehicles or other general traffic.

11: Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Indvidual or Organisation

There were 809 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Individual	773	95.31%
Organisation	36	4.44%
Not Answered	2	0.25%

- Over 99% of respondents answered this question. Of those who responded, only 4.44% were representing organisations.

12: If you are representing an organisation, can you please provide the name of that organisation?

Although organisational responses represented only a small proportion of total submissions, they demonstrate engagement from several key stakeholder sectors:

- Taxi and private hire industry.
- Tourism and hospitality sector.
- Business representative organisations.
- Event and conference venues.
- Active travel and cycling interests.

The largest identifiable organisational grouping came from the taxi sector, followed by the tourism, hospitality and business sectors.

The organisational responses indicate that support for the proposal was strongest among organisations connected to:

- Taxi operations.

- Tourism.
- Hospitality.
- Visitor attractions.
- Business and economic development.

These respondents generally considered enhanced taxi access to bus lanes to provide benefits in terms of:

- Journey reliability.
- Visitor experience.
- Accessibility.
- City centre connectivity.
- Economic activity.

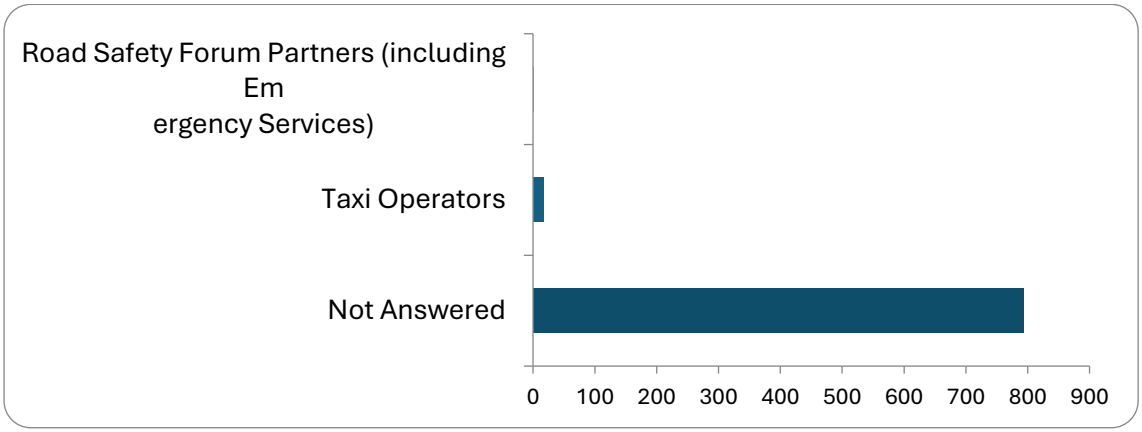
The principal alternative perspective was provided by the cycling sector, which emphasised the need to maintain safety for active travel users and preserve the primary transport function of bus lanes.

Overall, the organisational responses suggest broad support from transport, tourism and business stakeholders for measures that improve the efficient movement of people around Belfast, while highlighting the importance of balancing such measures against road safety and active travel objectives.

13: Please select your organisation or the type of organisation that you are part of: -

Sector

There were 18 responses to this part of the question.



Option	Total	Percent
Translink	0	0.00%
IMTAC	0	0.00%
Other Bus Operators	0	0.00%
Walk Wheel Cycle Trust	0	0.00%
Cycling UK	0	0.00%
Belfast City Council	0	0.00%
MLA, MP or Councillor	0	0.00%
Motorcycle Action Group	0	0.00%
Road Safety Forum Partners (including Emergency Services)	1	0.12%
Taxi Operators	17	2.10%
Not Answered	793	97.78%

- A total of 18 respondents answered this question, of whom 17 were taxi operators.

Section 4: Analysis of Responses

The Citizen Space consultation generated a substantial level of engagement and provided a broad range of views on the Experimental Traffic Control Scheme (ETCS) permitting all classes of taxis to use specified bus lanes within Belfast City centre. However, it should be noted that the vast majority of respondents were from the taxi industry.

The responses indicate a high level of support for both the principle of taxi access to bus lanes and the continuation of the current ETCS arrangements. 79% identified as taxi drivers within the 811 respondents. Respondents who supported the scheme most commonly cited improved journey time reliability, enhanced accessibility for passengers, operational benefits for the taxi industry, and the role of taxis within the wider public transport network.

A smaller number of respondents expressed concerns regarding potential impacts on cyclists, active travel objectives, bus lane effectiveness, and the potential implications for bus journey times and road safety. These responses emphasised the need to ensure that any future arrangements continue to prioritise sustainable transport objectives and maintain the operational effectiveness of the bus lane network.

Section 5: Summary and Conclusion

The consultation findings should be considered within the context of the respondent profile, which was predominantly comprised of individuals and organisations associated with the taxi industry. While this reflects strong engagement from those most directly affected by the scheme, the consultation represents one element of the overall evidence base available to inform decision-making.

The consultation has provided valuable insight into stakeholder views and identified the principal benefits, concerns and considerations associated with the scheme. The findings, together with operational monitoring data, road safety assessments, traffic impacts and wider transport policy objectives, will inform the Department's assessment of the Experimental Traffic Control Scheme and any decisions regarding future arrangements for taxi access to bus lanes.

Alongside this document, an external consultant has been appointed to monitor traffic movements associated with the scheme, including both vehicular and cyclist activity. This information will provide further evidence on the impact of the scheme, including whether it has reduced congestion, avoided adverse impacts on bus journey times, and delivered wider benefits for road users. It should also be noted that the scheme was introduced during the construction of Belfast Grand Central Station in 2024 and, as such, the Department intends to end the ETCS in early January 2027 to facilitate monitoring of traffic conditions following the reinstatement of the original arrangements. Once this work has been completed, the Department intends to publish the findings on its website.