

Stakeholder engagement

# Mapping public and political sentiment for First Bus

YASPER™

## What

With major changes to the way bus services operate in West Yorkshire coming into force in 2025, First Bus required a programme of sentiment mapping to see where they were perceived to be hitting the mark and to identify areas they should focus on for improvement.

Being in possession of this data would help the business to understand customer and stakeholder priorities and continue building relationships before important franchising decisions were made.

We designed a robust and bespoke sentiment mapping proposal for First Bus, which aimed to deliver a comprehensive report covering qualitative and quantitative insights. Using a mix of questions aimed at gathering a rounded view of sentiment, we sought to give First Bus in West Yorkshire the data it needed to improve services and perceptions.



## How

Working with a trusted British Polling Council member, we commissioned public polling of 1,000 bus users in West Yorkshire, looking at their existing sentiment towards not only First Bus but competitors across the bus landscape, as well as rail and other transport operators.

Alongside the public polling, we created a microsite, which aimed to broaden our research into political stakeholders, namely elected members across the five districts of West Yorkshire, MPs in the region, and other officers and public officials with a stake in the successful delivery of bus services.

To drive traffic, we created an email campaign focused on delivering as many stakeholder responses as possible within the one-month window. Alongside these surveys, we conducted several 1-2-1 interviews with elected members, gathering further insights and interrogating the answers that had been given.

**10%**  
response rate from stakeholders

**Seven**  
30-minute stakeholder interviews carried out

**1,000**  
bus users views analysed

## Results

Our deep understanding of transport, infrastructure and politics allowed us to provide actionable insights that would deliver on First Bus's requirements. Our approach resulted in a highly visual 30-page report, analysing the data gathered from our two surveys, as well as the verbatim responses given, providing key recommendations by way of a conclusion.

Our research uncovered key insights into public and stakeholder perceptions, where they aligned, and where they differed, tracking this against what stakeholders were hearing from residents. The verbatim interviews gave invaluable insight into the day-to-day comments that elected members were being faced with and equipped the business to better engage with stakeholders.

We used these findings to create stakeholder presentations at a district-by-district level, and a more generic one-pager aimed at addressing some of the key themes. We assisted First Bus in identifying connections who would benefit from this context and used media relations to communicate key messages.

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