

**Notes of the Sevenoaks Town Team Executive Virtual Board Meeting
Wednesday 3rd March 2021**

Meeting started 6.30 p.m.

Meeting concluded: 8.30 p.m.

Executive Board Attendance:

Cllr Simon Raikes	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Victoria Granville Baxter	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Linda Larter, Town Clerk	Sevenoaks Town Council	Present
Cllr Avril Hunter	Sevenoaks District Council	Present
Cllr Tony Clayton	Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association	Present
Austin Blackburn	Go Coach	Present
Elliott Waters	Southeastern	Present
Jane Parish	Sencio	Apologies
Hannah Kay	Knole, National Trust	Apologies
Andrew Eyre, Chairman	Stag	Present
Julie Phillips	Chamber of Commerce	Present
	Blighs Meadow	Absent
	Sevenoaks Chronicle	Absent
Roger Walshe	Sevenoaks Society	Present
Maxine Morgan Vice Chairman	Specsavers	Present
Roberta Ware	Francis Jones Jewellers	Present
Elizabeth Dolding	Warners Solicitors	Present
Glenn Ball	Architect	Present
Cllr Elizabeth Purves	Hollybush Residents Association	Present
Byron Brown	Bradbourne Residents Association	Present
	Round Table	Absent
	Police	Absent

In attendance: Dawn Blee, Cllr Nicholas Busvine OBE, Mayor, Cllr Dr Canet, Cllr Richard Parry, Jim Hughes, Emily Haswell and Helen O’Sullivan.

At the beginning of the meeting a presentation (attached) was provided by Austin Blackburn MD of Go Coach. All present congratulated Austin on his innovative and positive projects during what was a very difficult time. It was good to note the increased current and anticipated bus use.

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** as indicated above.
- 2. Declaration of Interest:** none received.
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 16th December 2020**
Agreed as a true record.
- 4. Post Lockdown – Sevenoaks being ready and encouraging use of local businesses.**
The overall aim of the Town Team was to support economic activity and encourage people to visit and use local businesses (within public health guidelines).

The following ideas were discussed:

- i) Introduction of parklet(s) – previously proposed within Buckhurst 1 car park.
- ii) Town Centre Ambassadors continue to support businesses and public providing communications about opening the town centre safely.
- iii) Town Team Weekly Newsletter to continue to promote businesses as they re-open. All were encouraged to share the newsletter widely.
- iv) Make the town as attractive as possible, hanging baskets etc.
- v) Be aware of the current changing demographics, increased presence of younger generation.
- vi) In the short term, until cafes are able to open outside seating areas again, there was considered a lack of seating for people to eat and drink outside. Consider alternative methods of addressing this.
- vii) Raise awareness to businesses of the relaxation of planning and licensing regulations to use space outside their premises to carry out business – subject to application process.
- viii) Promote and highlight the green spaces (including seating) which are available in the Town Centre. Including Vine, Upper High St Garden, Environmental Park.
- ix) Events and Trails – when permitted to do so, encourage more to attract people to the town centre.
- x) Buckhurst 1 Car Park – review plans for potential use during May and June for pop up stalls, parklet for entertainment, seating etc. Noted Sevenoaks Town Council had completed application for Premises Licence.

5. Virtual Business Show & Awards

Julie Phillips and Linda Larter had worked up exciting ideas for producing virtual Business Show and Business Awards. These were subject to the need for sponsorship as normal. Unfortunately, only one sponsor agreed compared to the normal amount. It was noted that it was currently a difficult financial time for most businesses.

6. Business Hub

Construction of Business Hub was now well under way with a planned opening for April 2021. Images of the building under construction were shared.

7. Reports from Partnership Members and Attendees

- i) Hollybush Resident Association
It was noted that additional benches were to be installed in Hollybush Recreation Ground.
- ii) Jim Hughes
Stated he welcomed the Go Coach bus initiatives and was willing to help with Town Team projects.
- iii) Bradbourne Residents Association
Two new picnic benches had been installed. During lockdown, the open spaces were having many more visitors. Unfortunately, there had been some anti-social behavior. It was hoped when public health guidelines permitted to reintroduce the Event programme.

- iv) Town Centre Project Manager (SDC)
Would be continuing to support local businesses with information and advice from the reopening the high street campaign.
- v) Station Manager, Southeastern
The peak demand for train services was 87% lower than prior to the pandemic. Newer train stock was expected in September which would be more accessible. Car Park 4 had been used for the vaccination centre. Very sadly there had been a recent death among the staff and all present provided condolences. A collection locker was now available for people who had ordered online goods. The station had won an internal Gold Award for its accessibility initiatives.
- vi) Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association
Was raising concerns about the lack of regular service for trains during the day and the manner in which it had been decreased.
- vii) Francis Jones Jewellers
Currently focusing on preparing for re-opening and making good use of current stock. Welcomed that new businesses continued to open in the town centre. Remained concerned about the high level of crime in the town centre.
- viii) Senior Action Forum
Would like the opportunity to promote the Go Coach bus initiatives.
- ix) Chamber of Commerce
Was working on their own Recovery Plan. Networking sessions were planned to continue online. Would continue to support local businesses with advice relating to funding and training and information workshops.
- x) Sevenoaks District Council
Arrangements were being put in place for reopening the council offices to the public. Recently refuse collections had been challenging due to snow and the need to still use Tunbridge Wells centre. Grants for second tranche and those recently announced would continue to be progressed.
- xi) Go Coach
In addition to information provided at the beginning of the meeting, to note that school transport would recommence the following week.
- xii) Specsavers
Had recently had a quiet spell however were becoming busier. The town was generally busy and venues such as Malabar were very busy.
- xiii) Warners Solicitors
Continued to be very busy and were recruiting staff.

- xiv) Cllr Richard Parry
Shared Roberta's concerns about town centre crime particularly the shoplifting happening in Waitrose. Was also receiving complaints about the changes to train timetables.
- xv) Glenn Ball, Architect
Local projects were progressing well. In general, the industry seemed busy.
- xvi) Mayor
Noted that the Upper High St Gardens were well used, especially by Otto's customers. He would welcome the opportunity to support and promote local businesses.
- xvii) Helen O'Sullivan
Welcomed the opportunity to join the meeting and would appreciate the consideration of more seating in the town centre.
- xviii) Stag
The Stag had used the current lockdown to refurbish facilities as part of the Arts funding.
- xix) Sencio
Sencio was preparing for the reopening of the leisure facilities in line with the government's roadmap. Key dates: -
29th March - all outdoor sports, this may include golf and outdoor pitches.
12th April – indoor leisure centres and pools, this may include gyms, pools etc for individual activities (not exercise classes) or adult indoor sports.
17th May – most facilities will be able to take place indoors, includes indoor exercise classes and all outdoors sports -
21st June – restrictions to be lifted.
An action plan has been formulated in line with the above key dates and activities that can be offered at each stage are currently being identified and liaison with the appropriate governing body of sport is being carried out to ensure we comply with their guidance as well as the government's – e.g. reopening of the golf centre no changing rooms can be opened in phase 1, and reopening of the leisure centres in phase 2 from 12th April no indoor sports for adults other than individual activities can be offered e.g. no badminton and no group fitness classes.
Staff training for lifeguards will be scheduled prior to reopening the leisure centres to ensure compliance – the swimming pools have been closed since November.
All facilities will be prepared ready to receive customers once more.
The Ground maintenance staff will prepare the golf course so it will be ready to reopen 29th March.
Communications have been sent to customers updating them on what we are doing.
Further communications are planned this week to go out to all golf members advising them of when bookings will commence for the golf course. The golf pages on the website will be updated to reflect this.

On-line fitness classes will continue to be offered together with the Q & A sessions with the Wellness Manager for both customers and the general public.

xx) Knole

Things are still tricky at Knole, high visitor numbers walking in, anti-social behaviour, littering and verbal abuse towards staff. I would like to pass on my thanks to the Town Centre Covid Marshalls who have been fantastic. They have been regularly patrolling the site and checking in with the staff team who work at the gate box entrance.

xxi) Sevenoaks Town Council

Although currently short of staff the Town Council had continued with all its day-to-day activities many of which were having substantially increased use e.g., public open spaces, litter picking, public toilets, cemetery, supporting voluntary organisations.

The Bat & Ball Centre was being used as an Asymptomatic Testing Centre seven days per week. The Business Hub construction was progressing due to be completed by the end of March. The MUGA had been completed and would be able to open soon.

The Annual Town Public Meeting would take place on 15th March 2021.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th April 2021.

9. Press Release

The following was agreed:

- i) Support for Go Coach initiatives – when appropriate and agreed by Go Coach
- ii) Business Hub project

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.



Sevenoaks District Buses

Building better transport links

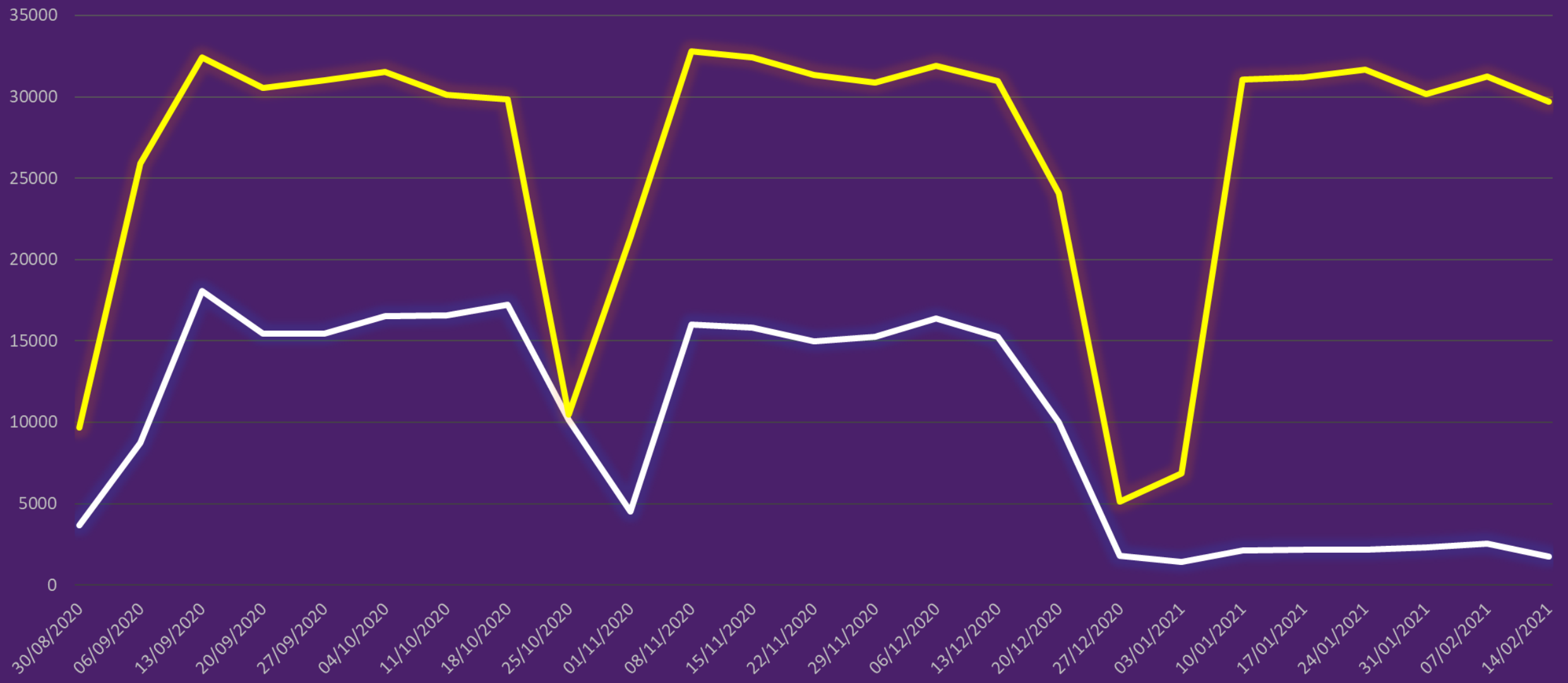
By Austin Blackburn
Managing Director, go-coach hire limited

Our Objectives

- Reduce car usage and dependence on private transport
- Continue to provide a better service in rural areas
- Control costs by integrating other transport needs
- Get closer to the goal of having a fully multimodal provision (MaaS)

Passenger numbers comparison year on year

2020/21 Previous Year



go Transport for Sevenoaks

Multimodal options for our passengers



go Fixed Line timetabled buses
Routes 1, 2, 5, 6, 429 and E1.



Go2 Shared
Demand Response buses



Go2 Direct
Demand Response small vehicles for one group
that are pre bookable too

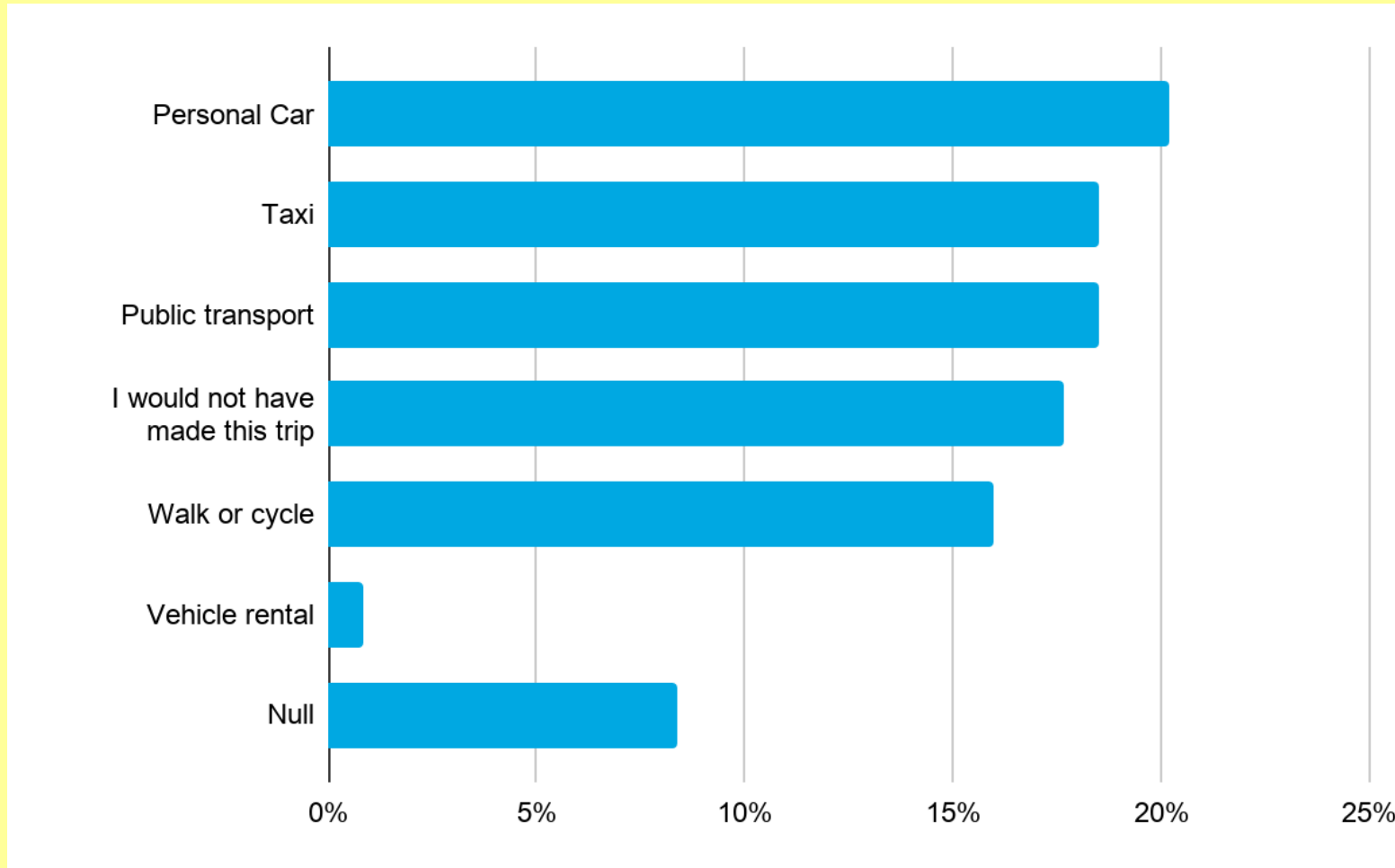
go2 Passenger Survey Results

These are results from the November passenger survey of regular passengers

The go2 service is replacing private vehicle & taxi journeys.

How would you have made your most recent trip if go2 wasn't an option?

Portion of all responses, %



"Lifesaver, makes everything easier. I can travel where and when I want."

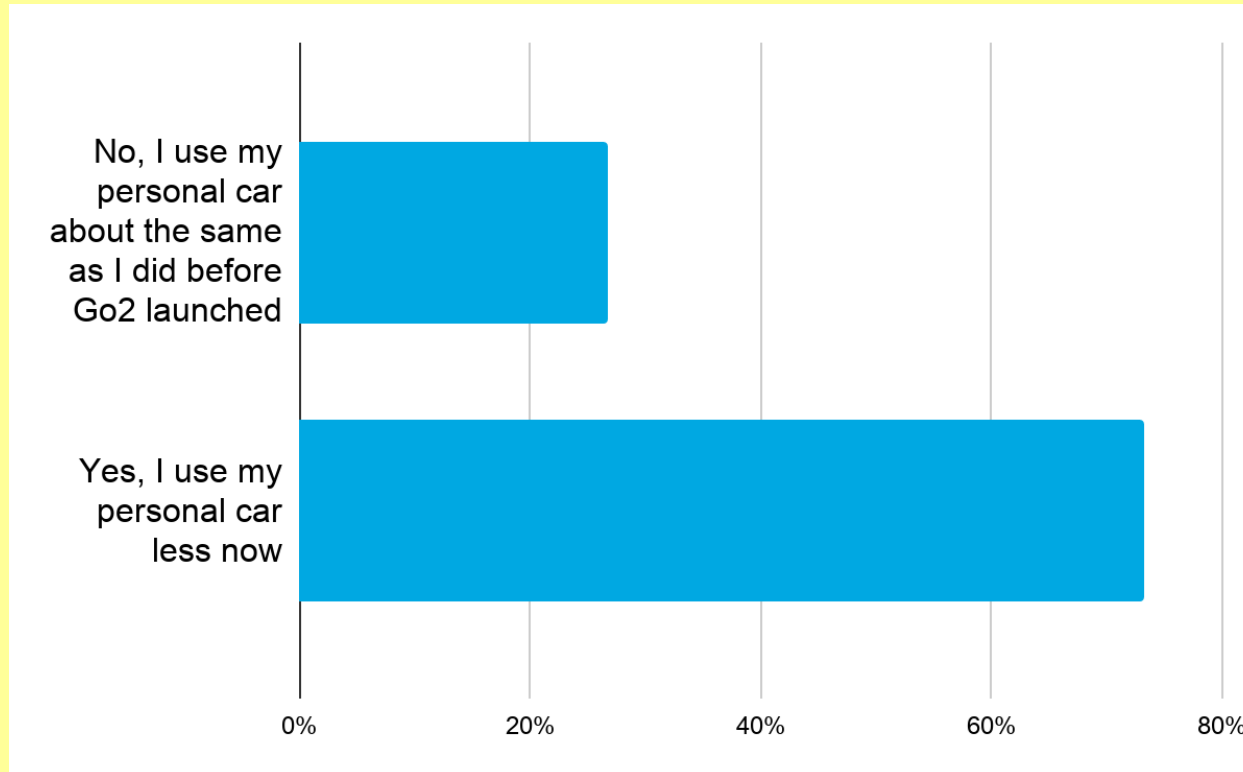
"Completely changed my journey to & from work as before I was taking 2 trains & a bus just to get to work."

Source: Survey of Go2 Passengers in November 2020. 119 responses received (27% response rate).

Car owners use personal cars less often when an on-demand bus service is available.

Has go2 reduced your use of a personal car since it launched?

Portion of responses from people who have a personal car, %



“Saves me getting car out and finding, and paying, for somewhere to park. Previously never seemed to be buses available when I wanted them.”

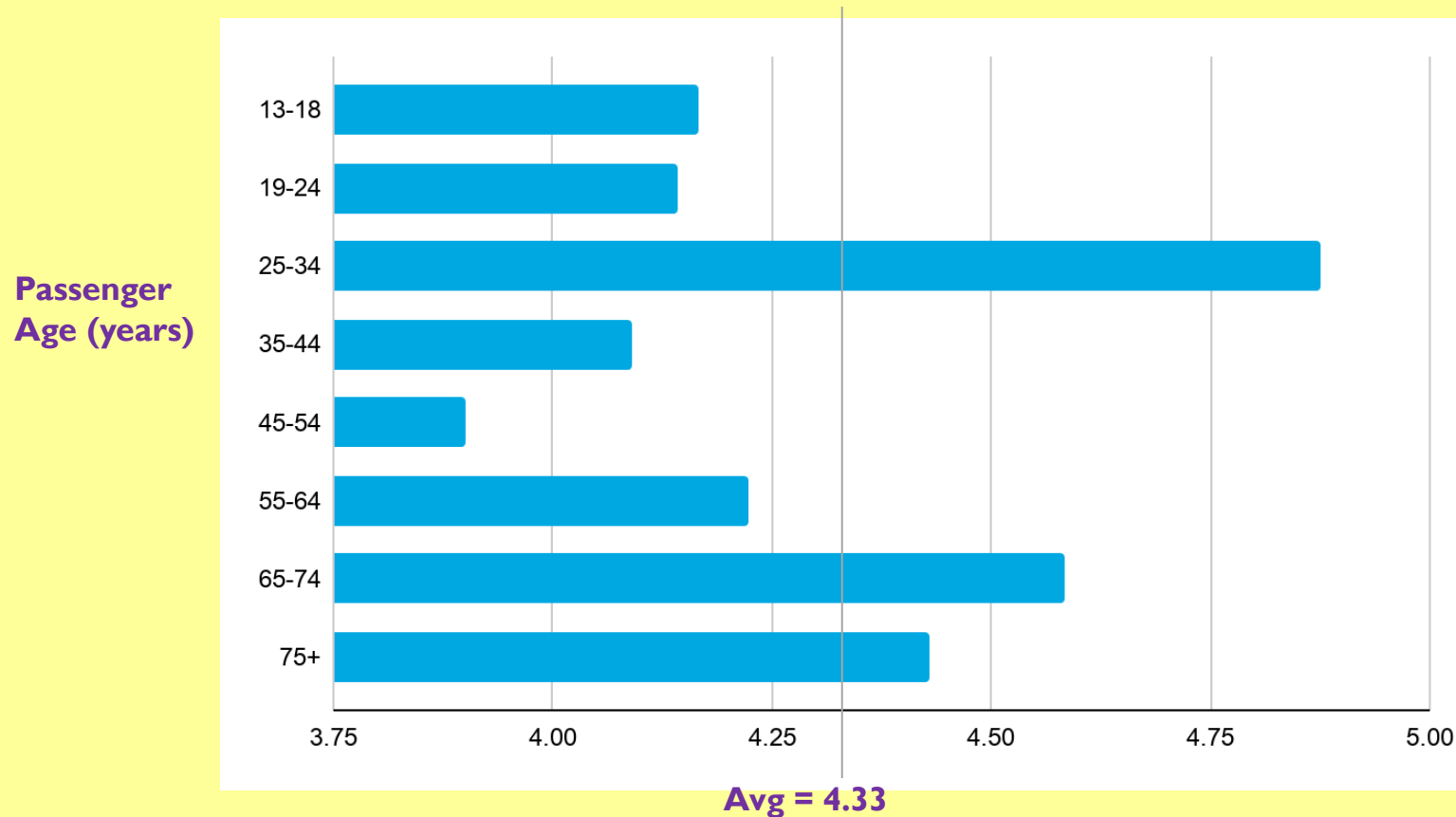
“Once the app was on my phone, I found I used it more and more , it's just so easy and dependable. This fantastic service keeps the whole Sevenoaks district open to me.”

Older and younger passengers are especially satisfied with the go2 service.

On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied are you with the overall go2 Service?

1 = not satisfied at all; 5 = completely satisfied

Portion of responses, %; excludes survey participants who chose not to disclose age.



“As an elderly person, I am quite happy with the service. I like being dropped near my home by very friendly drivers and not having to wait for the bus at a set time.”

"This service is really excellent - like a door-to-door service, with a very friendly helpful team behind it, and a great feeling of safety / security"

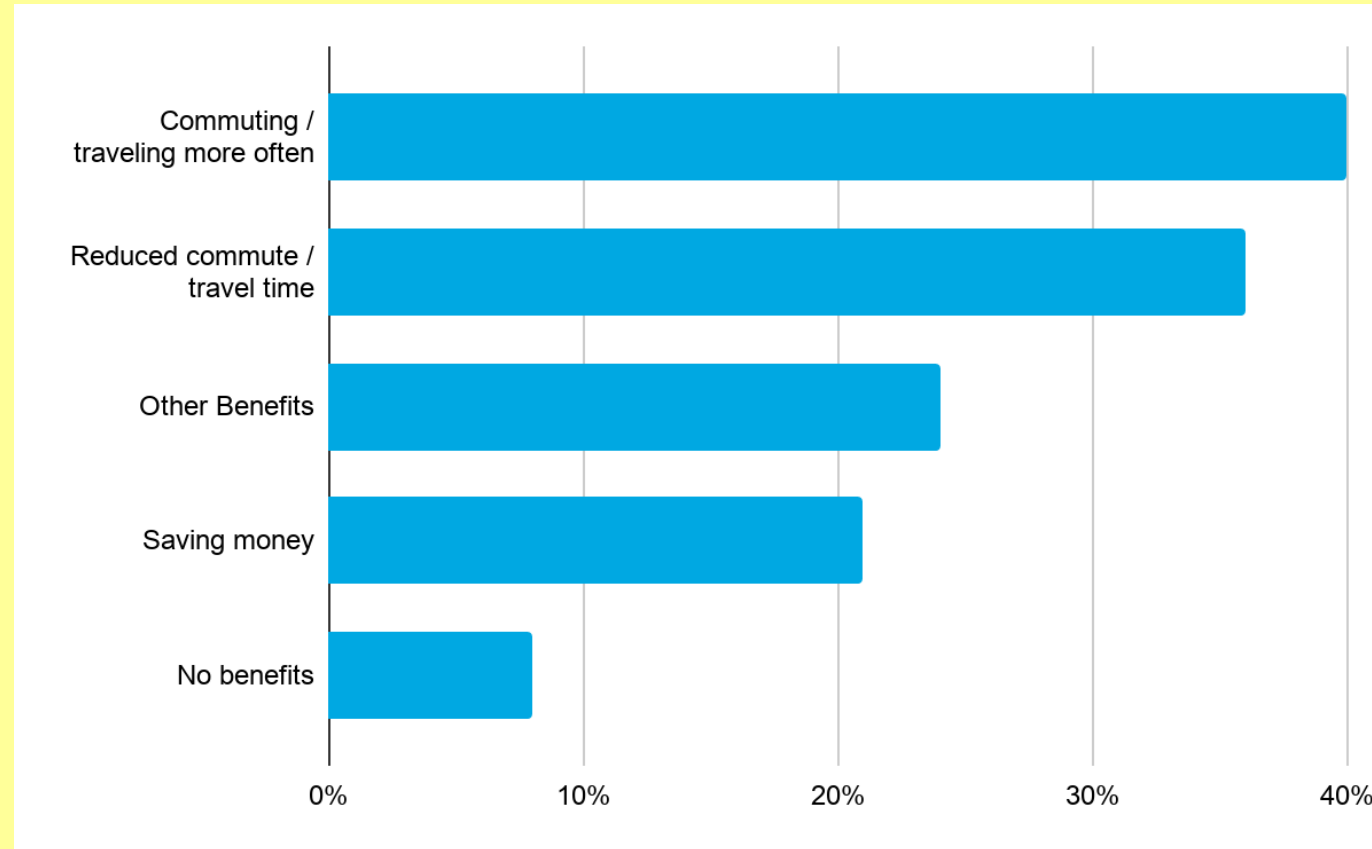


Passengers say they travel more often when DRT is available.

What benefits have you seen from using go2?

Passengers could select multiple responses

Portion of responses, %

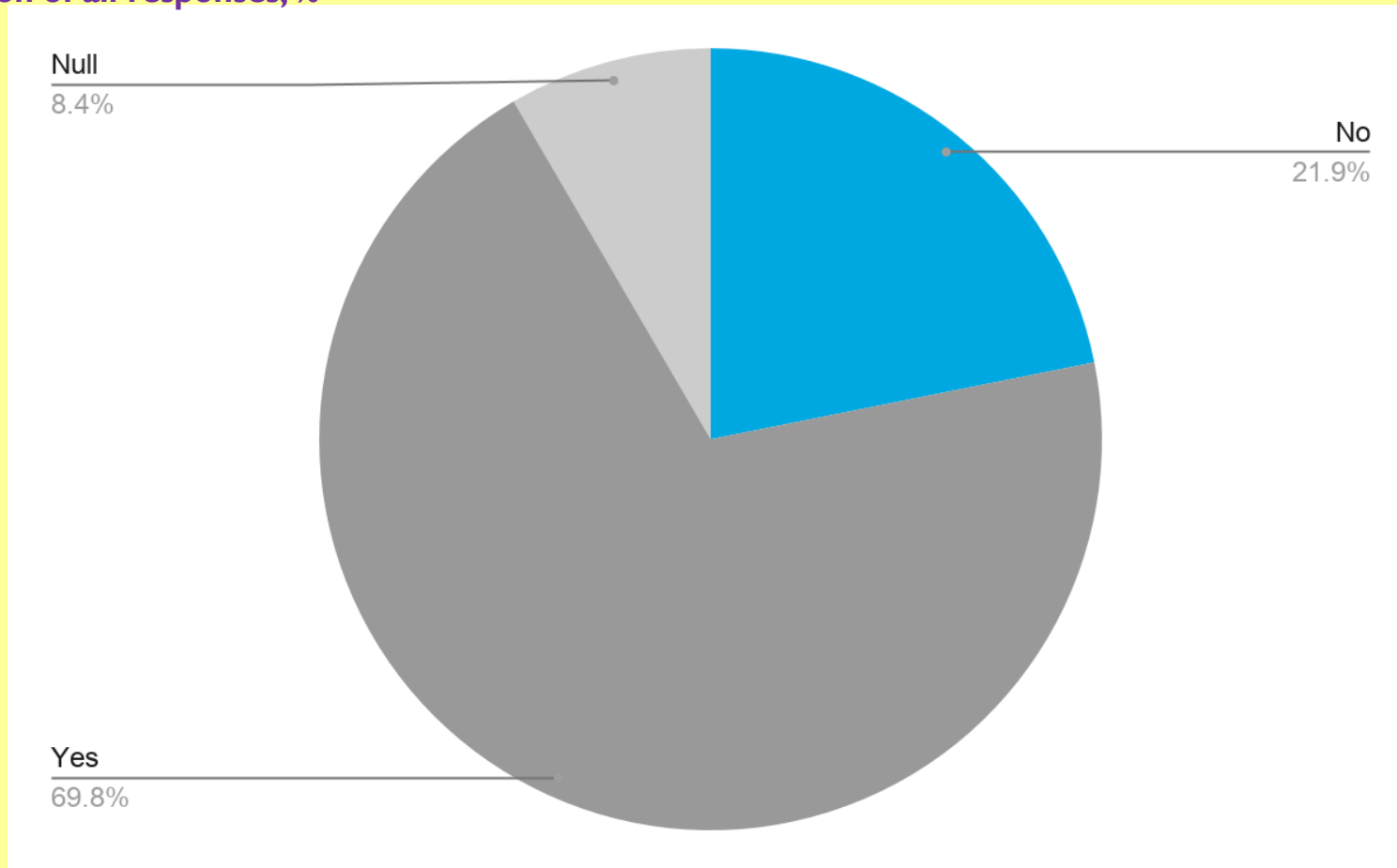


Source: Survey of Go2 Passengers in November 2020. 119 responses received (27% response rate).

On-demand buses bring more people onto public transport.

Did you use the regular Go Coach Sevenoaks bus routes before go2 launched?

Portion of all responses, %



22%

Of passengers did not use Go Coach buses before go2 launched

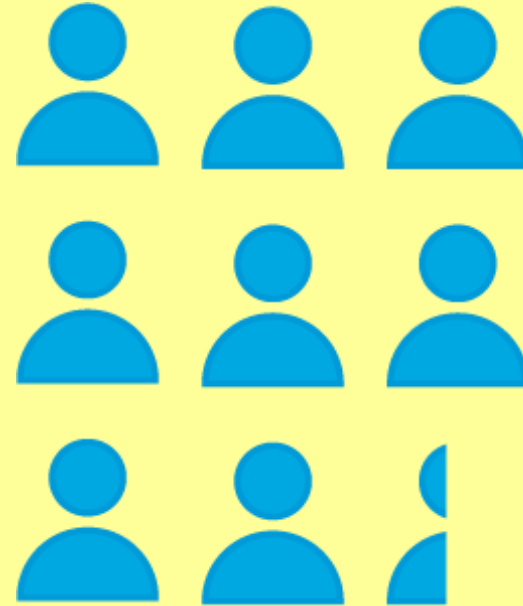
Source: Survey of Go2 Passengers in November 2020. 119 responses received (27% response rate).

Passengers want DRT options to continue.

Would you like to see go2 continue to replace some of the regular Go-Coach Sevenoaks bus routes?

Yes

83%



No

17%

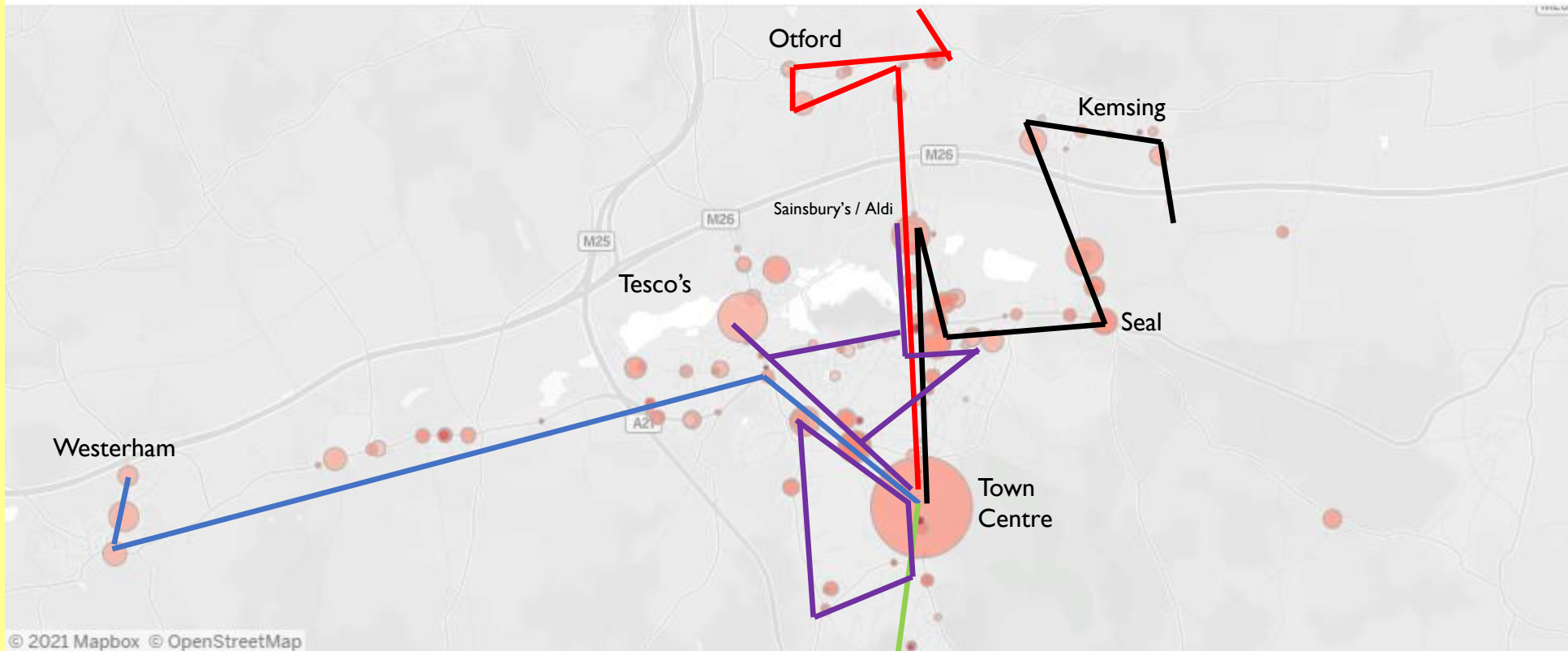


go2 pick up points

Data from last 3 months

Bookings	Passengers (Rides)	Completed of Accepted	Cancelled of Accepted	No Showed of Accepted	Avg Pickup ETA	Avg Pickup Walk Distance	Avg Ride Rating
10,618	12,084	83.4%	7.5%	1.6%	15.3	250.4	4.9

Pickup Points Map (metric = Completed of Accepted) Size: count of bookings Color: darker = worse Distance Unit: Feet



- Route 1
- Route 2
- Route 5
- Route 6
- Route 8



go Fixed Line timetabled buses

Routes 1, 2, 5, 6, 429 and EI.

Starting 12th April

- Re-instate commercial routes 1 and 6.
- Re-instate tendered routes 2 and 5
- Re-instate route 8 town service (hourly as pre covid)
- Continue to operate EI in Edenbridge

Use Via fixed line app on all services

- Passengers able to pay for their fares on app (innovation fund application)
- Passengers being able to track their bus
- Concessionary fares accepted as normal



go Fixed Line Fares

Routes 1, 2, 5, 6, 429 and EI in
Sevenoaks District

Flat fare trail aimed at stimulating the bus economy and help the green agenda

- Flat fare of £2.50 on all services (Edenbridge EI £1.00)
- Child/young person flat fare of £1.50 for passengers up to 19 years old (may require ID)
- £5.00 all day ticket
- No returns, weekly's or 10 journey tickets.
- Existing fares on school services



Dartford and Wilmington School Buses

Re-numbering from 19th April

- Route 412 Renumbered D12
- Route 413 Renumbered D13
- Route 429 school journeys Renumbered D29

Existing fares and passes accepted

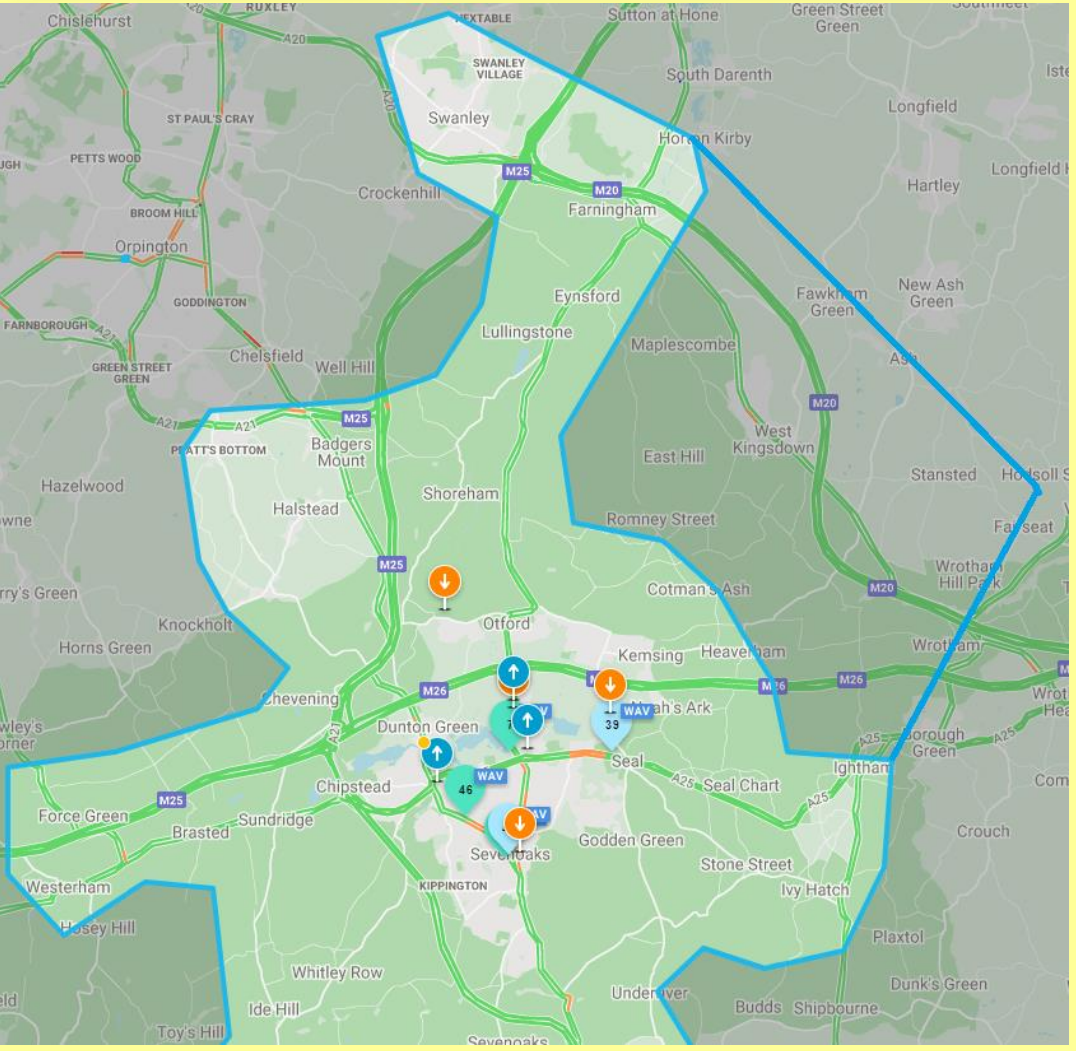
Not included on app as not open to general public

Sevenoaks school routes unchanged



go2 Shared Demand Response buses changes from 12th April

- Extension of area to incorporate West Kingsdown, East Hill Farm, Stanstead and Fairseat





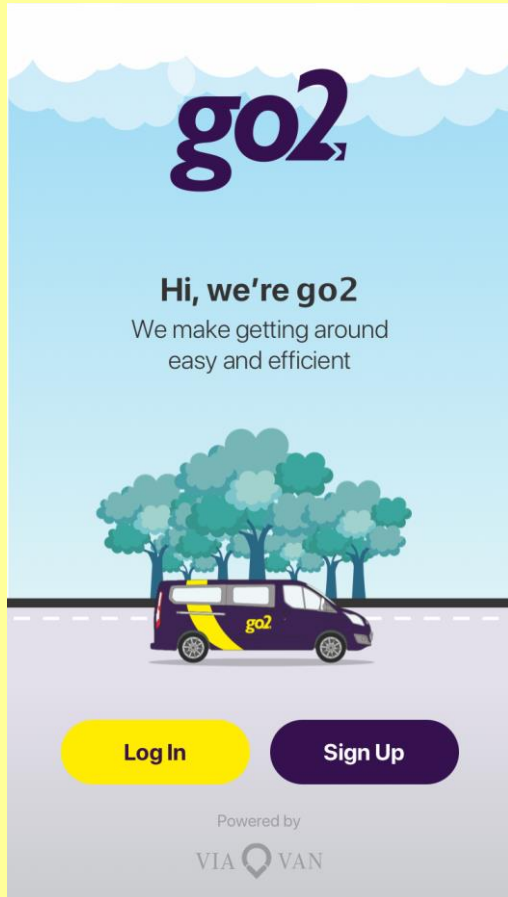
go2 Direct

Demand Response small vehicles for one group that are also pre bookable

Starting late April / early May

- High quality private transport using small Transit vehicles operating under Private Hire Licences
- More corner to corner / door to door than present bus stop to bus stop shared service
- Pre-bookable service option
- Use on KCC SEN transport?
- Concessionary's will have small discount
- Fares vary on demand, but less than taxi(possibly dynamically in the future?)
- Extension of operating hours as evening economy re-opens

go2 app.....



- App will show up to 3 options when available:
 - Fixed line
 - Shared
 - Direct
- Fares will vary between options all based on distance as the crow fly's (presently as the bus route)
- Various promotions to attract riders
- Pre-bookable service on go2 Direct