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Addressing the challenge of public participation in the transport planning process amongst the socially excluded – an analysis of existing provisions in UK LTP3 plans

Joanna Elvy - RGS Annual International Conference, Friday 30th August 2013

Contact Details

- **gy06jde@leeds.ac.uk**
- http://www.its.leeds.ac.uk/people/j.elvy

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable mobility cannot be realised without tackling social exclusion or without engaging socially excluded individuals in the transport planning process (Banister, 2008; Lucas, 2012). Furthermore, the context specific nature of transport related social exclusion would benefit from a disaggregated approach that utilises the abilities of those at risk of exclusion (Lucas, 2012; Jones and Lucas, 2012). Traditional participatory methods have often dissuaded socially excluded individuals from taking part and new approaches are required to engage with those who have found it difficult to make themselves heard in the past (Hodgson and Turner, 2003; Dibben, 2006). Therefore, there is a need to build upon existing research (Bickerstaff et al, 2002; Hodgson and Turner, 2003; Dibben, 2006; Michels and De Graaf, 2010) in order to better understand the contribution that public participation could have in tackling transport related social exclusion.

Ten years on from the 2003 Social Exclusion Unit report on transport and social exclusion, this paper will discuss the findings of a documentary review of current UK policy by exploring existing approaches to transport related social exclusion and the engagement of those socially excluded individuals within the 3rd generation Local Transport Planning process (LTP3). A content analysis of the policies and engagement techniques outlined within a number of current generation LTP3 plans and supporting documents will be used to assess the prominence of participatory techniques as an approach towards tackling transport related social exclusion. This paper will then consider the potential implications of these findings on directions for future research in this area. This research represents the first stage of a PhD study which aims to develop and validate scenarios which bridge the gap between socially excluded individuals and the transport planning process in the context of working towards sustainable urban mobility.

OUTLINE

- **CONTEXT**
  - Local Transport Planning in the UK
  - Transport and Social Exclusion
  - Public Participation in the Transport Planning process
- **METHODOLOGY**
  - Case Study Selection
  - Content Analysis
  - Coding Strategy
- **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**
  - Timescale, Vision and Objectives of LTP3 plans
  - Public participation/consultation within the LTP3 process
  - LTP3 Policies aimed at tackling social exclusion
- **DISCUSSION**
  - Implications of findings on current UK policy
  - Potential directions for future research

CONTEXT

Local Transport Planning in the UK

Outline of recent law and policy for LTPs *(DfT, 2009 and May, 2013)*

Transport Act 2000

5 Year LTPs (England LAs outside London)
(LTP1: 2001-2006 and LTP2 2006-2011)

Local Transport Act 2008

Modified LTPs, more autonomy and flexibility in terms of objectives, indicators, and timescales (removal of requirement to replace every five years), LAs to monitor own plans – also **2009 DfT guidance = 5 Goals**

Coalition Government (2010 onwards)

2011 White Paper (*Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen*) shifted policy focus

Localism Act 2011 (local solutions to local problems)

Significant funding cuts for LTP (35% on integrated transport and 28% on LA personnel) disproportionately affecting low-cost and locally derived interventions government wish to promote

Transport and Social Exclusion

- Need to better understand and articulate the impacts of transport policy and decision making processes on socially excluded groups and individuals *(Lucas and Jones, 2012; Lucas and Currie, 2012).*

- **2003 SEU report** '*making the connections*' and **2011 SDC report** *'fairness in a car-dependent society'* were key influences on transport related social exclusion (TRSE) policy in the UK.

- Need to account for complexity of individual travel, particularly amongst the socially excluded *(SDC, 2011; Lucas, 2012)*

- Challenging economic environment for initiatives aimed at tackling TRSE.

- Localism Act 2011 focuses attention on local projects but potential for communities with less political leverage to lose out *(Lucas, 2012).*



(Transport Network, 2013)

Public Participation in the Transport Planning process

- **Pragmatic view** – attempting to engage with people beyond traditional political engagement *(Lowndes et al., 2001).*

- **Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation** – difference between seeking views and redistributing power.

- 'Duty to Involve' (introduced in 2007 and repealed in 2011) replaced with *Best Value Statutory Guidance* which instead retained a 'duty to consult' *(DfT, 2009; DCLG, 2011; Involve, 2012)*.

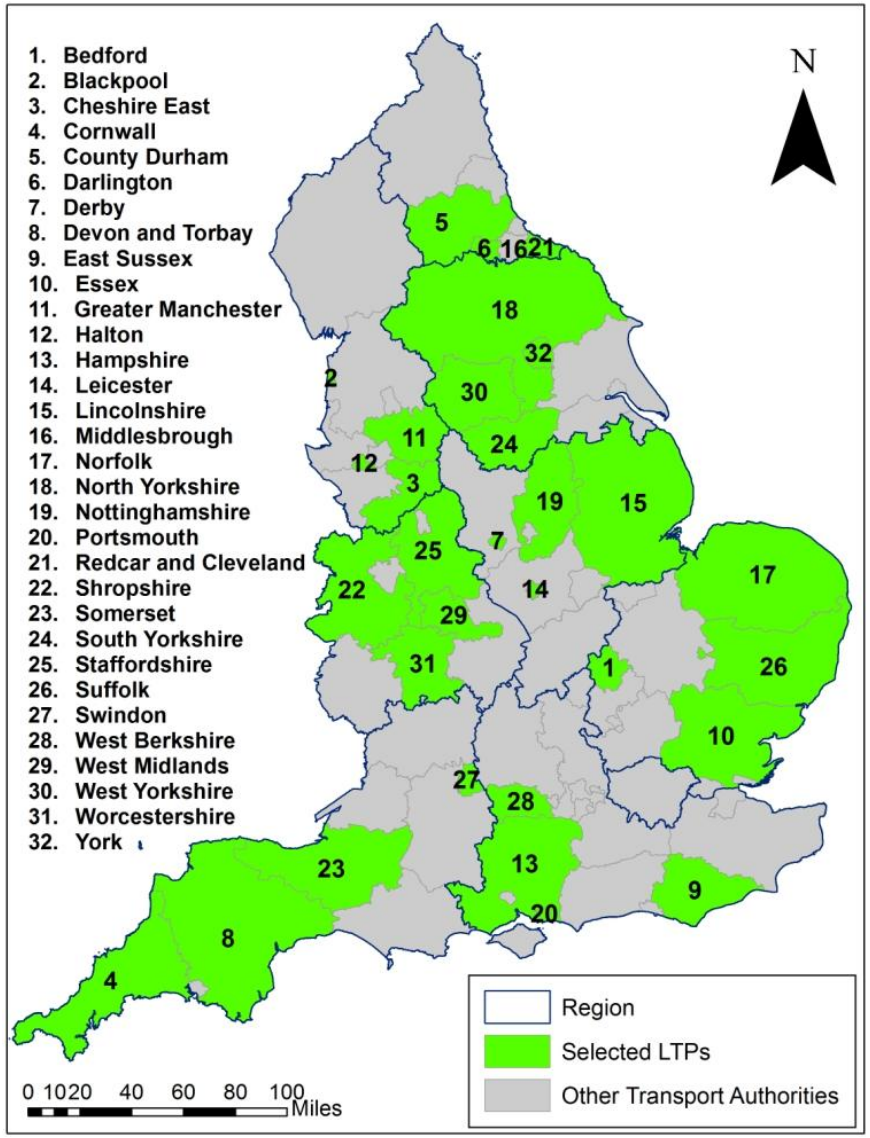
- **Past Research has shown:** *(Lowndes et al., 2001; Bickerstaff et al., 2002; Hodgson and Turner, 2003; Raje, 2004; Dibben, 2006; Jones and Currie, 2012; Lucas, 2012)*
  - Participation instruments mostly consultative
  - Engagement with stakeholders and interest groups but less with the 'general public'
  - Danger that 'ordinary people' can be ignored, particularly amongst disadvantaged groups
  - Actively engaging/utilising socially excluded individuals is an important part of resolving identified weaknesses in the LTP process

- **What impact have recent policy changes had on participation within LTP3 process? Role for new technologies and social media?**

METHODOLOGY

Case Study Selection

- LTP process is implemented differently in London, and is devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- English LTP3s produced by TAs outside of London were chosen for analysis – 83 in total
- Some LTP3s produced jointly by multiple transport authorities – and others overlap (City Region LTPs)
- Stratified random sample of 32 LTP3s (38.5%) based on former Government Office regions (4 per region)



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Content Analysis

- Quantitative content analysis of the 32 LTP3 plans (and supporting consultation report documents where supplied) looked at: *(Neuendorf, 2004)*
  - **Presence or absence of public participatory approaches** (including instances where groups and individuals at risk of transport related social exclusion were involved in the LTP process)
  - **Presence or absence of policies aimed at tackling transport related social exclusion** ('direct' or 'inferred')
  - **The extent of those participatory approaches and policies**

- A typology of public participatory approaches was adapted from one used by Bickerstaff *et al.* (2002) and a typology of the groups and individuals potentially 'at risk' of transport related social exclusion was adapted from the SEU (2003) and SDC reports (2011)

- From these typologies a **coding strategy** was developed

- **Limitations of method and under reporting** – following results presented in that context...

Coding Strategy

CODING STRATEGY

THEME 1: EVIDENCE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AMONG SOCIALLY EXCLUDED GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

- **ABSENT (IN EITHER LTP3 OR CONSULTATION REPORT ANNEX WHERE SUPPLIED)**
  - *Do also note where not mentioned specifically in LTP (i.e. where extra supplementary documents have had to be consulted)*
- **PRESENT – If so:**
  - Forms of Participation discussed (Bickerstaff et al, 2002)
    - TRADITIONAL – provision of LTP policy information
      - Consultation document (or at least evidence of 'process')
      - Public meetings
      - Information provision (including presentations)
      - Exhibitions
      - Roadshows
      - Alternative format (of LTP)
      - Internet (where documentation is made available)
      - Stakeholder consultation (including stakeholder events and local transport forums), thematic partnerships, and steering groups (including consultation with local authority members)
      - Promotion of LTP through media (including newsletters)
      - Drop in Sessions
      - 'Other'
    - TRANSPORT SERVICE ORIENTED – seeking views of customers
      - Complaints/Suggestions
      - Service satisfaction survey
      - Other opinion poll
      - Questionnaires
      - Comments (on service)
      - Interviews
      - 'Other; (Comments/Interviews)
    - PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON LTP ISSUES
      - Interactive web site (where responses/input can be made)
      - Use of Social Media
      - Citizens panel
      - Focus groups
      - User/Interest groups
      - Referenda
      - 'Other'
    - PUBLIC DELIBERATION ON LTP ISSUES
      - Issue forum
      - Area/neighbourhood forum
      - Shared interest forum (includes youth parliaments)
      - Visioning exercise
      - Citizens juries
      - **Partnerships that explicitly include members of the public**
      - **Workshops**
      - **Seminars**
      - **Conferences**
      - **Planning for real**
      - 'Other'
    - UNCATEGORIZED
      - Photo Competition
      - Forms of participation not outlined
  - Number of instances and instruments discussed
  - How were they used?
    - Early Stages (Development of Issues/Priorities/Options)
    - Later Stages (Around Publication of Draft LTP Stage)
    - Throughout (At all stages of LTP process)
    - Ongoing (Continuous into the future)
  - Who was involved?
    - Direct mention of socially excluded groups and individuals
    - Indirect mention through groups and individuals 'at risk' of social exclusion (after SEU, 2003 and SDC, 2011)
      - Older people
      - Children
      - Young people
      - Ethnic minorities
      - Lone parents
      - People with disabilities
      - People on low incomes
      - Future Generations
    - Mention of other public groups or individuals
    - No specific mention of any groups or individuals

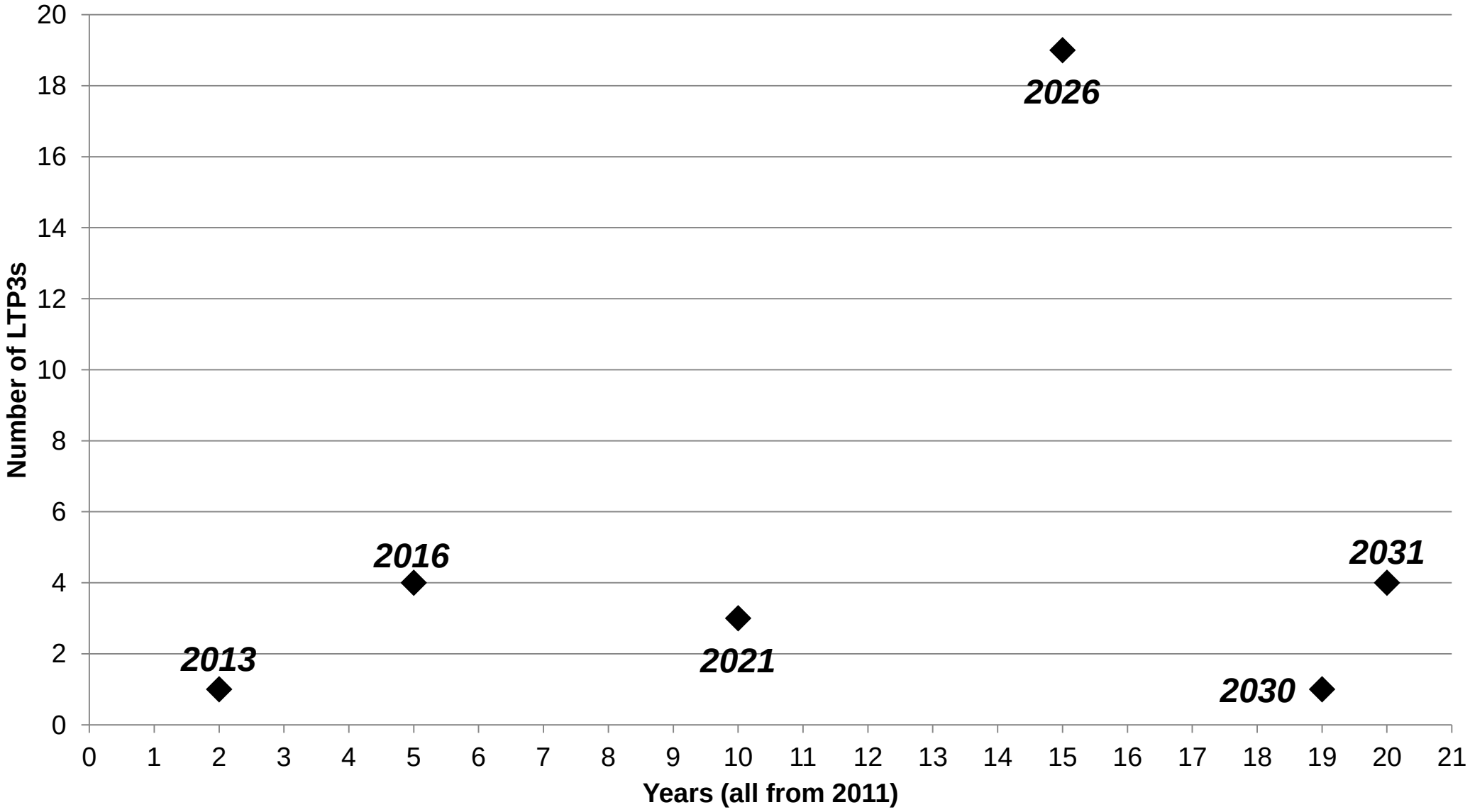
THEME 2: EVIDENCE OF POLICIES AIMED AT TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION

- **ABSENT**
- **PRESENT – If so:**
  - DIRECT POLICIES AIMED AT TACKLING "SOCIAL EXCLUSION"
  - INFERRED POLICIES AIMED AT GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS 'AT RISK' OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION (after SEU, 2003 and SDC, 2011)
    - Older people
    - Children
    - Young people
    - Ethnic minorities
    - Lone parents
    - People with disabilities
    - People on low incomes
    - Future Generations
  - POLICIES WHICH IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY BUT MAKE NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH 'INFERRED' REFERENCE TO 'AT RISK' GROUPS AND INDIVIDUCALS
- Nature of policies
  - Aspirational
  - Action-based
- Policy Themes
  - Public Transport
  - Community Transport
  - Walking and Cycling
  - Organisational/Area Travel Planning
  - Personal Travel Planning
  - Others

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Timescale, Vision and Objectives of LTP3 Plans

Timescale of LTP3 (Years from 2011)



Timescale, Vision and Objectives of LTP3 Plans

Vision statements – common words

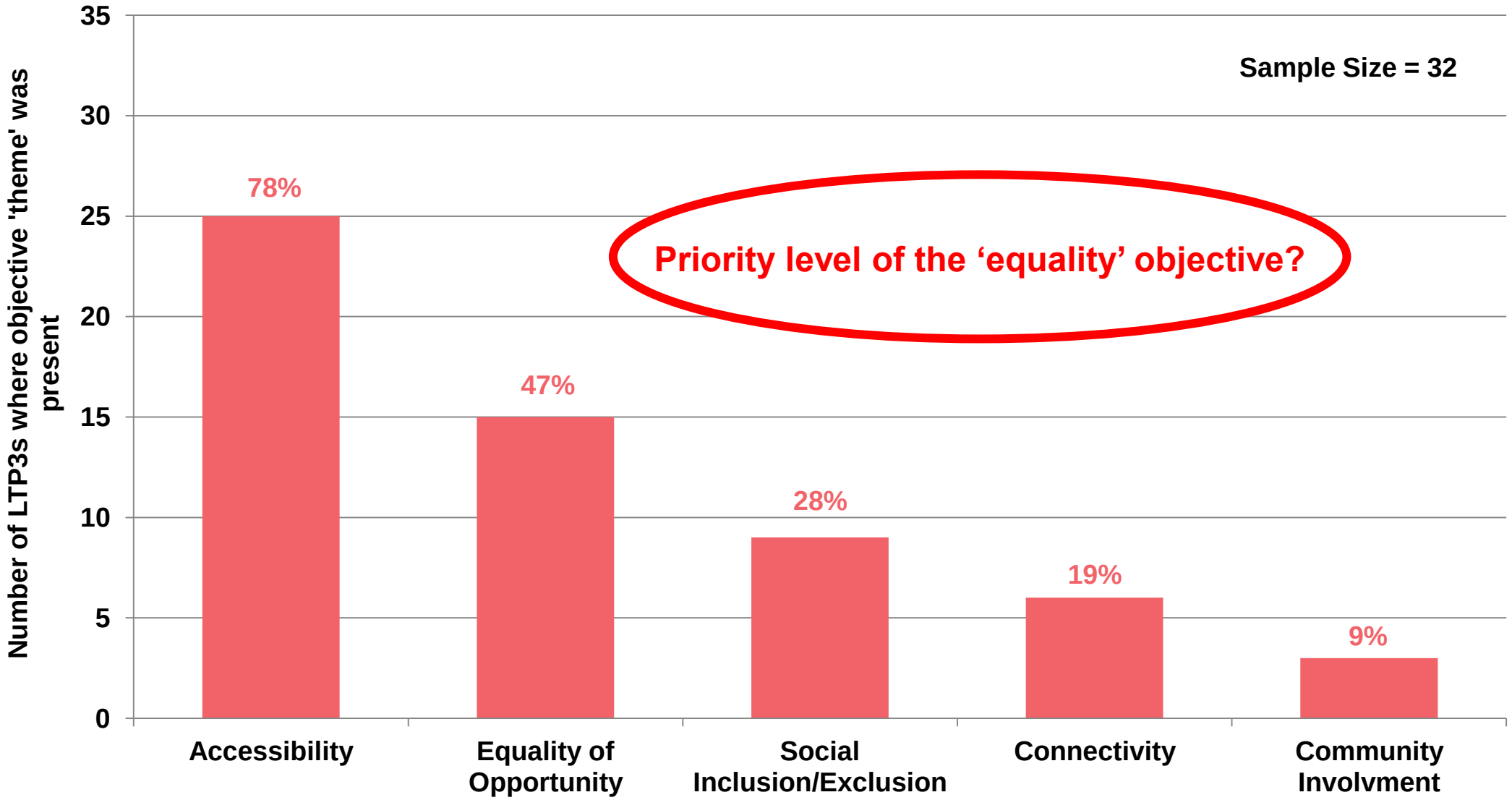
Sample Size = 32



100 most common 'key' words, produced using wordle.net

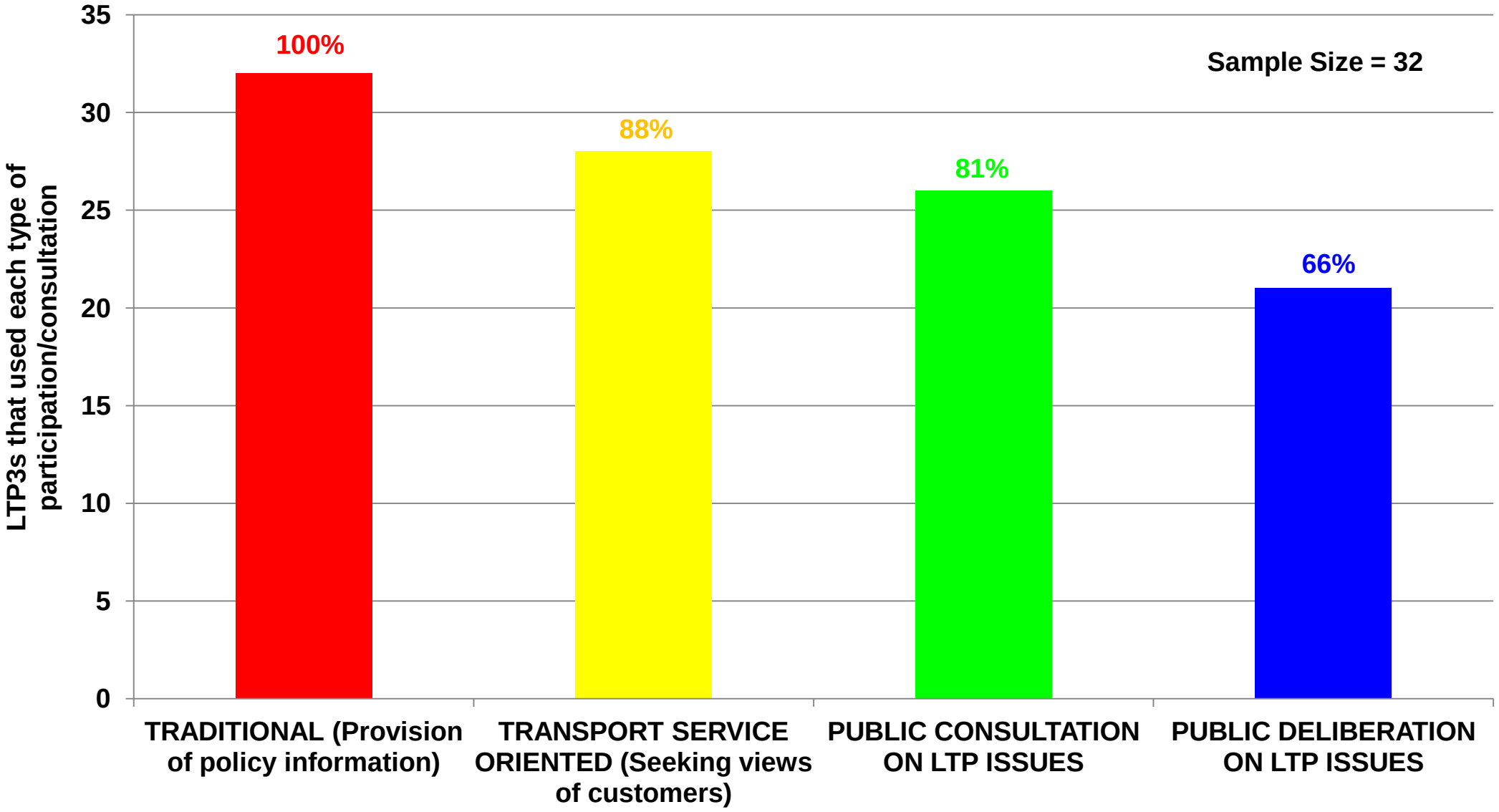
Timescale, Vision and Objectives of LTP3 Plans

Objectives relating to DfT goal of ‘equality of opportunity’



Public participation/consultation within the LTP3 process

Categories of instrument used



Public participation/consultation within the LTP3 process

Instruments Used

- Most LTP3s outlined consultation process with public and stakeholders and over half promoted alternative formats of the LTP
- Almost two-thirds of LTP3s outlined their use of **surveys and questionnaires** to seek public views on the plans and/or issues
- Almost half of LTP3s outlined the involvement of **user/interest groups and forums** in the development of LTP3
- **Interactive websites** and **workshops** were also popular methods of engagement

PARTICIPATION/CONSULTATION INSTRUMENT TYPE	Number of LTP3s that used this instrument
Consultation document/process	30
Public Meetings	3
Infomation provision / presentations	12
Exhibitions	6
Roadshows	3
Alternative Format of LTP (checked back pages)	19
Internet (where documentation is made available)	9
Stakeholder & 'Members' consultation (including events, partnerships, steering groups)	30
Promotion of LTP/Consultation through Media	12
Drop in Sessions	3
ANY TRADITIONAL (Provision of Policy Information)	**32**
Complaints/Suggestions	2
Service Satisfaction Survey	21
Questionnaires	20
Comments	4
Interviews	2
ANY TRANSPORT SERVICE ORIENTED – seeking views of customers	**28**
Interactive Website (where responses/input can be made)	14
Use of Social Media	2
Citizens Panel	8
Focus Groups	7
User/Interest Groups	15
ANY PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON LTP ISSUES	**26**
A Forum (Issue/Area/Neighbourhood/Shared Interest)	15
Visioning exercise	1
Partnerships that *explicitly* include members of the public	2
Workshops	10
Seminars	1
Conferences	1
Planning for real	2
ANY PUBLIC DELIBERATION ON LTP ISSUES	**21**

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Public participation/consultation within the LTP3 process

How participation was used

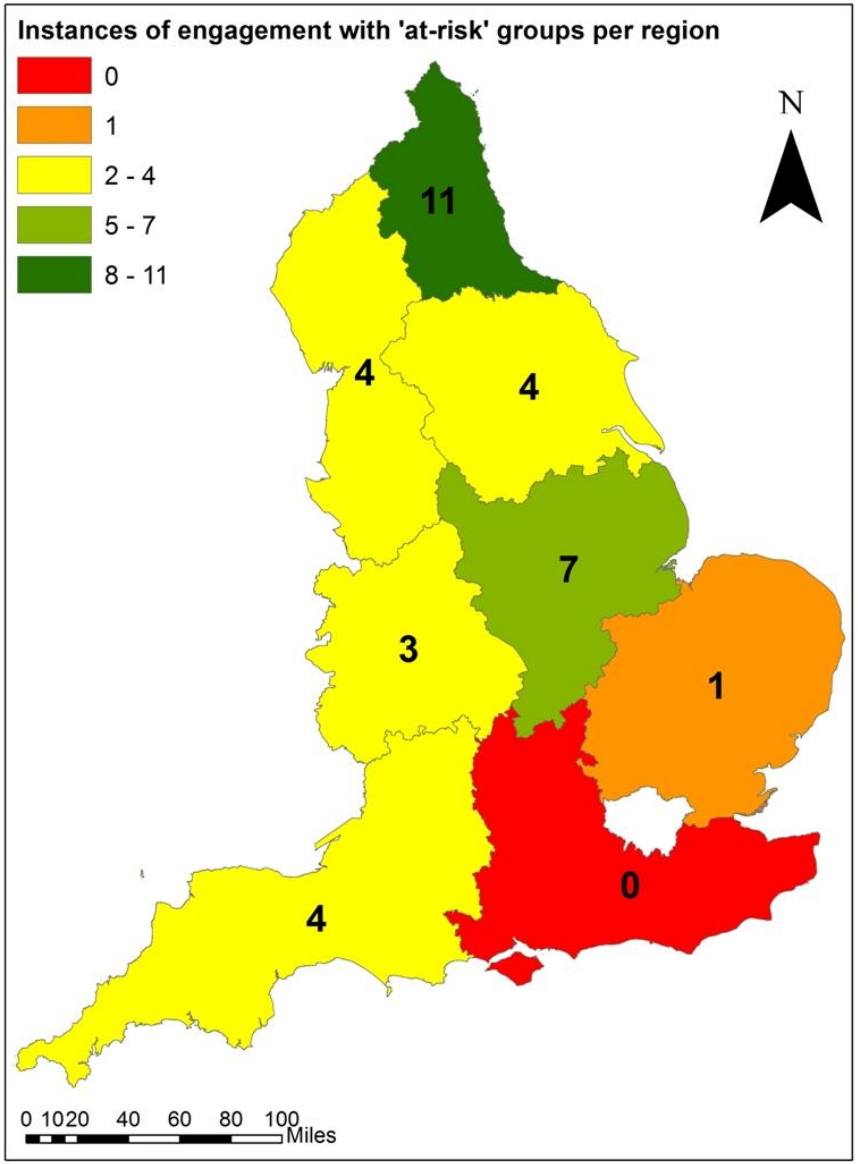
- Of the 32 LTP3s assessed:
  - **1** didn't outline how public participation was used
  - **27** outlined using public participation to develop **issues, priorities and options**
  - **23** outlined using public participation at the **draft LTP stage**
  - **22** outlined using public participation **throughout the LTP3 process**
  - **6** outlined **'ongoing'** forms of participation

- **Statutory duty to 'consult' –** widespread evidence of consultation with disability and age related stakeholder groups and service providers

Public participation/consultation within the LTP3 process

Who was involved and regional distribution

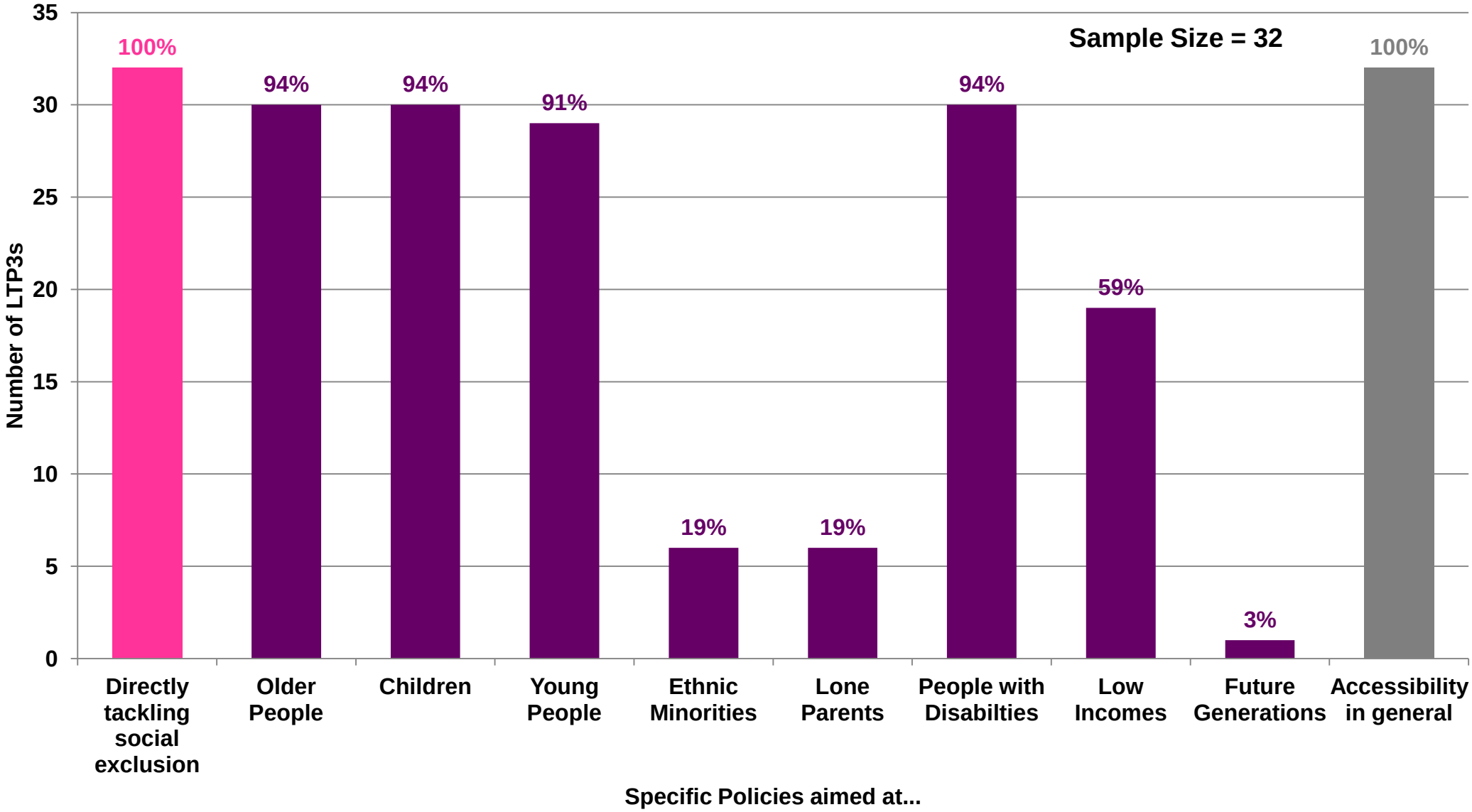
- In terms of engaging with individual ‘at risk’ groups and individuals in LTP3 process **beyond statutory stakeholder engagement:**
  - **13** LTP3s outlined specific participation amongst **people with disabilities**
  - **12** LTP3s outlined specific participation amongst **children & young people**
  - **6** LTP3s outlined specific participation amongst **older people**
  - **2** LTP3s outlined specific participation amongst **ethnic minorities**
  - No specific mention of **lone parents** or **people on low incomes**



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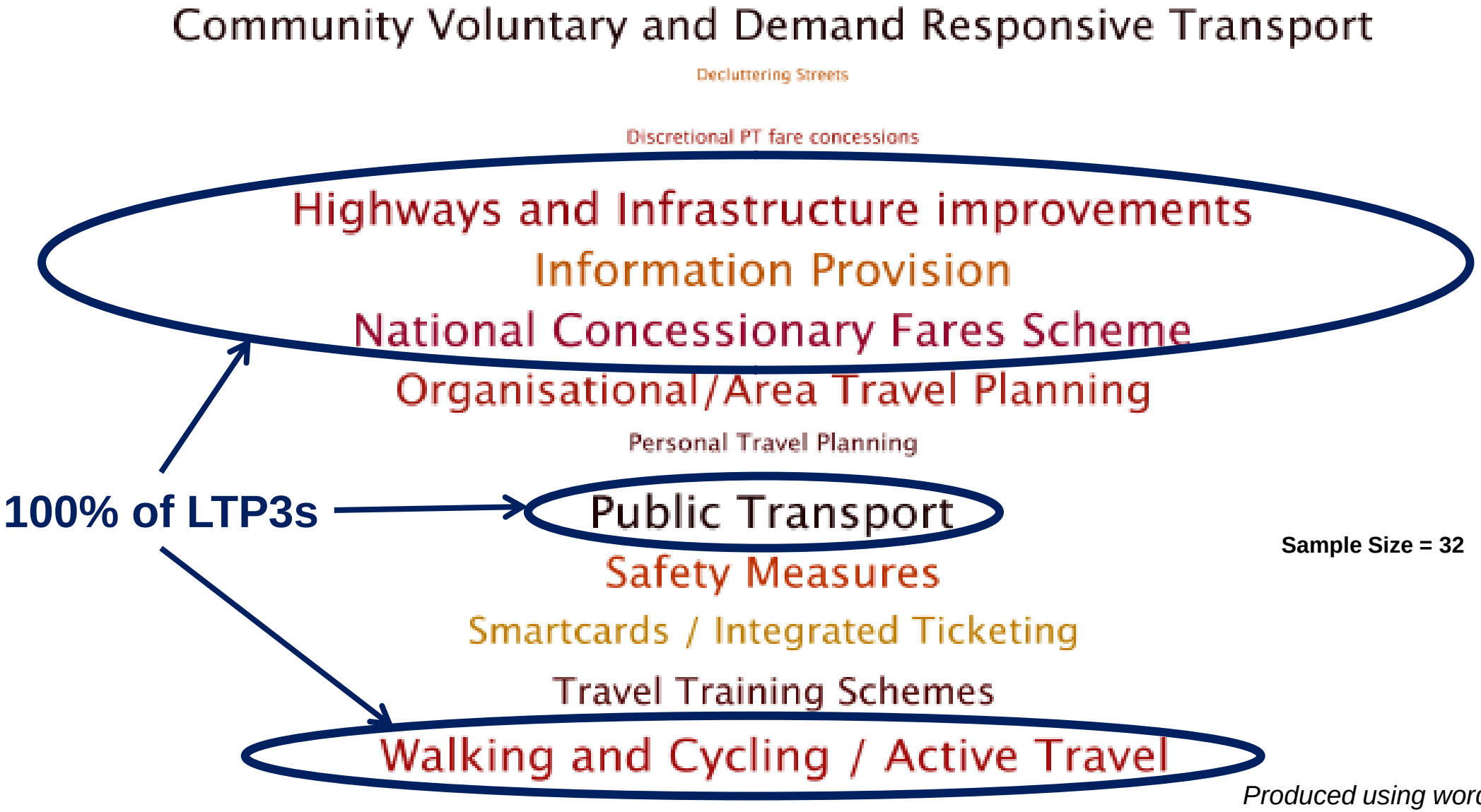
LTP3 Policies aimed at tackling social exclusion

Who policies were aimed at



LTP3 Policies aimed at tackling social exclusion

Policy Themes



Sample Size = 32

Produced using wordle.net

DISCUSSION

Implications of findings on current UK policy

- When results are compared against the study by Bickerstaff *et al.* (2002):
  - Increased evidence of engagement in the development of priorities/objectives/options albeit largely consultative in approach
  - Increased use of questionnaires/surveys and interactive websites
  - Similar usage pattern for other participation instruments
  - Reliance on stakeholder groups remains rather than engaging with disadvantaged individuals in some cases (internal diversity?)

- Accessibility planning is reported to have achieved significant results during LTP2 in beginning to tackle area-based social exclusion – but **more needs to be done at the disaggregate level within the LTP process**

- **Opportunity for better sharing of good practice between TAs (beyond surrounding area)** and **better utilisation of social media** as a participatory approach

- **Some emerging policy instruments** such as Personal Travel Planning **have potential to be used as a two-way dialog with socially excluded individuals** if resource challenge can be overcome

Potential directions for future research

- Under reporting of participatory techniques in some LTP3 plans likely - further triangulation required against ‘local government’ and ‘public’ perspectives of participatory practices for socially excluded groups and individuals.

- Further exploration of spatial trends between TAs

- Detailed evidence of the use and outcomes of particular participatory instruments amongst socially excluded groups and individuals

- This research represents the preliminary stage of an ESRC funded PhD study (University of Leeds):

  (*Towards sustainable urban mobility: Bridging the gap between socially excluded individuals and the transport planning process*)



(UH, 2008)

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