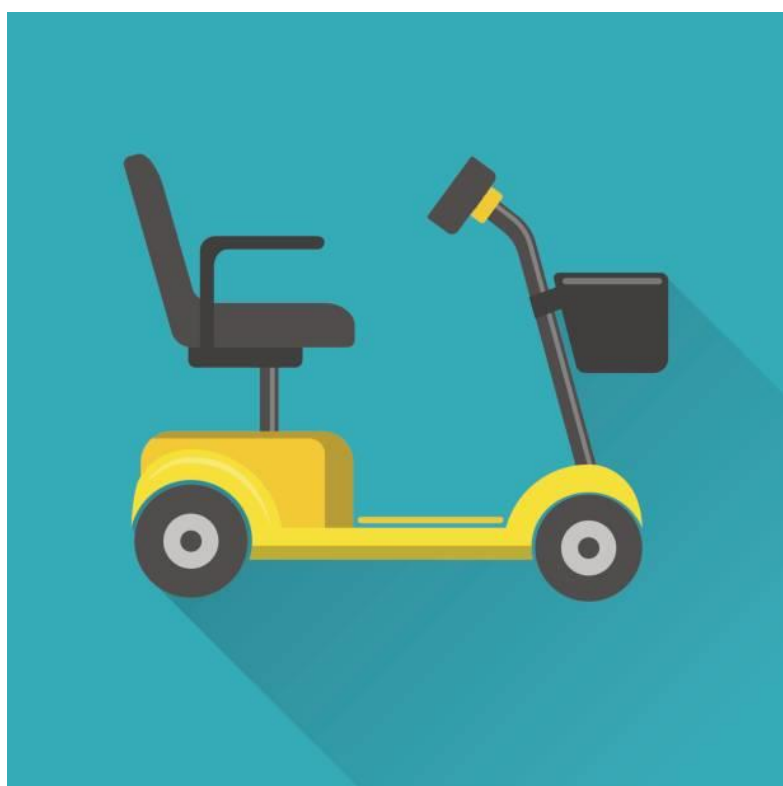




SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Mobility Vehicle Policy Consultation August 2025



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South Kesteven District Council
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Executive Summary

1. Tenants living in sheltered housing schemes (both corridor and non-corridor schemes) and those living in general needs housing blocks of flats were asked for their views on a proposal to introduce a policy governing all aspects of mobility and electric vehicle ownership/ leasing in council properties during a two-week consultation which took place towards the end of August/beginning of September 2025.
2. Opening on 29 August 2025, the survey ran for two weeks, closing on 11th September 2025. 72 responses (43.1%) were received from tenants in SKDC's sheltered housing schemes and 95 (56.9%) from those in general needs housing.
3. The surveys were completed by those who owned/leased mobility vehicles and e-scooters/electric bikes as well as those who didn't. A third of respondents (26 or 35.1%) stated that they currently use a mobility scooter. Two thirds (48 or 64.9%) said that they didn't.
4. The proportion of responses received from those using e scooters and/or e bikes was very low. Only 2 responses were received from tenants who used these types of electric vehicles.
5. When asked if they supported a proposal to introduce a requirement for tenants to register their scooter with the Council, just under three quarters of respondents (136 or 72.7%) were in favour.
6. Seven out of ten (124 or 70.1%) agreed with the proposal that mobility scooters should only be charged during the day – between the hours of 8am and 8pm.
7. Respondents were asked to comment on each of the proposals contained in the Council's Mobility Scooter Policy. Their feedback could be categorised into several themes. These included disability, accessibility, affordability and independence. Safety and security were also important. Illustrative quotes have been included in this report.

Purpose of report



8. The purpose of this report is to update South Kesteven District Council (SKDC), Cabinet and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the results of the consultation that took place with various stakeholders during August and September 2025.

Background

9. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ requires the Council to assess the risk created by the use of mobility scooters and other electric vehicles when used in their residential properties, particularly in relation to how they are stored and charged. The Mobility Vehicle Policy has been re-drafted to address these issues, doing this by placing conditions on the use of scooters and other electric vehicles in council properties. Adopting the Mobility Scooter Policy would allow the Council to introduce a registration scheme where residents must ask for permission to have a mobility vehicle. Tenants would also be required to insure and maintain their vehicle.

Purpose

10. The purpose of this consultation is to inform a decision SKDC will be asked to make regarding the approval of an updated Mobility Vehicle Policy – expanded to include other types of electric vehicles which require charging, such as e-scooters and electric bikes. Covering the use, storage and charging of electric vehicles within the Council’s housing stock- both general needs and sheltered housing, the policy would, if adopted, also require tenants who own or lease a mobility scooter to register it with the Council, and to fulfil certain conditions. This would meet the statutory requirement, as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which requires SKDC to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire in any premises they have responsibility for.

Scope

11. The scope of this consultation was focused on ensuring that the views of those who will be affected by the proposed changes were reflected in the responses. This included the following stakeholders:
 - Tenants living in sheltered housing “corridor” schemes

¹ The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety order requires any person who has some level of control in respect of premises, must take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from **fire** in those premises and make sure people can safely escape from those premises if there is a **fire**.

- Tenants living in sheltered housing “non- corridor” schemes
- Tenants and leaseholders living in general needs housing (flats)
- Tenants who have informed the Council that they have a mobility-related disability and/or are eligible for the assisted garden maintenance scheme and /or the assisted refuse and recycling collection scheme.
- Key stakeholders who work with/ support those who may be affected by the introduction of the policy e.g. carers

Objectives

12. The principle objectives of this consultation were to:

- Ensure that various stakeholders were consulted on the proposal to manage the use and storage of mobility vehicles and other electric bikes/scooters in sheltered housing and general needs housing properties across the district.
- Ensure that various stakeholders were consulted on the proposal which will require those owning or leasing a mobility scooter, e bike or e scooter to register the appliance with SKDC.
- Fulfil the statutory requirement for the Council, as set out in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which is to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk from fire in any premises they own.

The secondary objectives of this consultation were to:

- Explain the approach to the management, storage and charging of mobility scooters, and why it is necessary.
- Explain why tenants would be required to register their mobility scooter and what the conditions of registration would be.
- Measure the degree of support or otherwise for the proposals.
- Give tenants the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns
- Understand and be aware of the impact this may have on specific groups of stakeholders.

Methodology

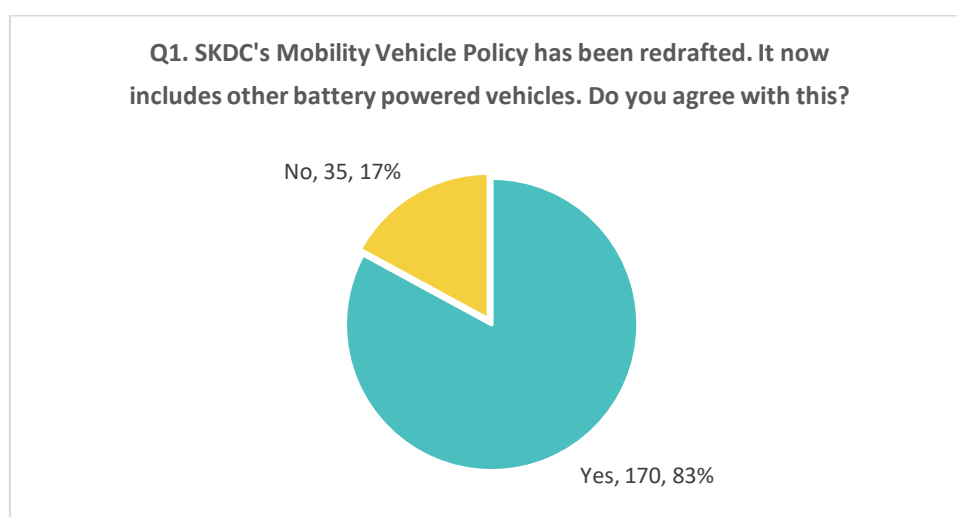
13. The responses to these consultations were collected over a two-week period (29 August through to 11 September 2025). 210 responses were received in total. Just under half of these were from tenants in sheltered housing (72 or 43.1%) with just over half coming from tenants in general needs housing (95 or 56.9%). The data was gathered via a web link to an on-line survey. Tenants in the Council’s sheltered housing complexes were given printed copies of the surveys, and asked to complete them. Thirty printed copies of the survey were received.

14. The surveys were designed to communicate the reasons for the Council's Mobility Vehicle Policy, and to ascertain support (or not) for the proposals it contains, particularly in respect of registration, storage and charging. It included sections on:

- Expanding the parameters of the policy to include e scooters and electric bikes
- Requiring tenants to register their mobility vehicle
- The use of designated storage areas
- When charging of mobility vehicles is permitted
- Using a mobility vehicle whilst in a lift
- How designated spaces should be allocated
- Visitors use of mobility vehicles
- Charging tenants to store and charge their mobility vehicle
- If they own/lease a mobility scooter or other electric vehicle
- If they do, where they store and charge it currently
- An option for them to ask questions or make further observations about the proposals

The results

15. Tenants were told that the Council has re-drafted its Mobility Vehicle Policy. To manage the safety of residents and protect buildings, the parameters of the policy have been expanded to include other battery powered vehicles, including e bikes and e scooters. The first question asks tenants if they agree that the policy should be expanded to include e scooters and electric bikes as well as mobility scooters. Eight out of ten tenants (170 or 82.9%) agreed with the expansion of the policy as illustrated in the pie chart below:



16. When invited to provide more context about their answer, respondents used the opportunity to comment on the policy more generally. Their feedback could be grouped into the following themes:

Fire safety and charging concerns. Respondents were worried about the risks associated with charging mobility vehicles, especially regarding fire hazards and battery safety. Concerns included a lack of charging infrastructure, restrictions on charging times, and the volatility of lithium batteries, as illustrated in the quote below:

“In view of the growth in the use of mobility scooters and other electronic vehicles and indications that lithium batteries can be a fire hazard, a policy is needed.”

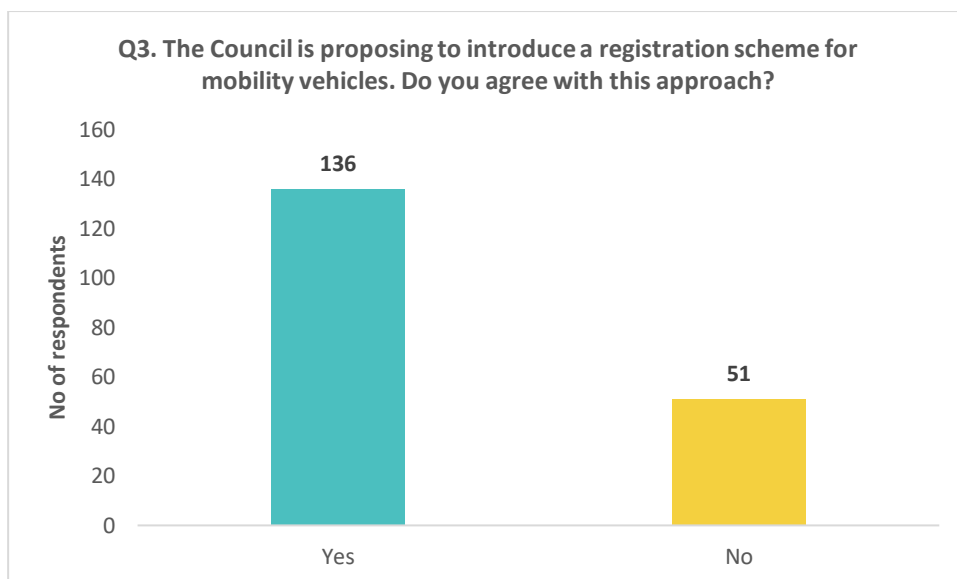
Disability and Accessibility. A number of responses highlighted the importance of mobility vehicles for independence and daily living. There were strong feelings about potential discrimination and barriers to access, with some expressing that policy changes could severely impact their ability to live independently. This is shown in the quote below:

“For those that require the use of their mobility scooters just to do even the basic tasks, if it can’t be stored in their home or directly outside their home; then you will effectively be trapping them in their home.”

Policy and Regulation. Some respondents question the rationale behind including certain vehicles in the policy, and view it as over regulatory.

No.....any scheme by you would be over reaching.”

17. Respondents were then asked for their views of one of the main constructs of the Council’s Mobility Scooter Policy – the proposal to introduce a registration scheme for mobility scooters. Registration would require:
- anyone who currently rents or leases a property from the Council and has a mobility vehicle, to ask permission to keep/continue to keep it.
 - SKDC to be made aware of who has vehicles; where they are stored and where they are charged
 - the tenant to provide documents each year to show the vehicle is maintained; serviced; electrically tested (portable appliance testing) and insured
 - the tenant to display a badge on each vehicle to show it is registered
18. Seven out of ten respondents (136 or 72.7%) agreed with this proposal. Just over a quarter (51 or 27.3%) were against this proposal as illustrated in the graph overleaf:



19. When asked why they had chosen to answer in this way respondents comments could be grouped into the following themes:

Accessibility and independence. Consultees were concerned about how policy changes may impact residents' independence and access – particularly if they were disabled.

“There’s enough paperwork now than disabled people have to fill out. This is far too stressful for people that are already struggling day to day with living as a disabled person, without the added stress....”

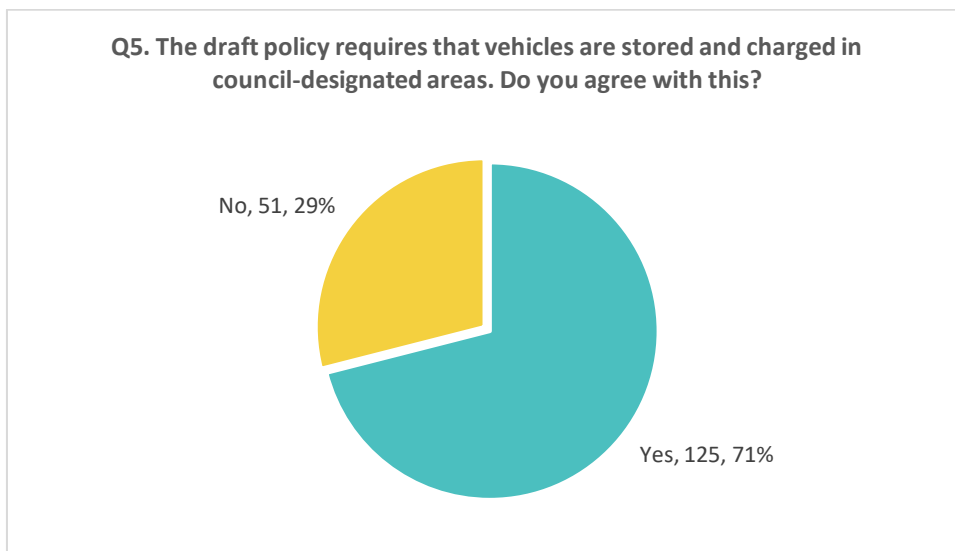
Safety and maintenance. Other comments related to safety concerns, especially around charging, PAT testing, insurance, and regular servicing. Respondents mentioned the costs and practicalities of maintaining mobility vehicles safely.

“You are singling out one type of product that is electric/ battery powered. The costs for those on pensions and benefits to comply will add more financial burden in these hard times. People who can't afford these measures could end up isolated in their homes.”

Policy and Regulation. Other comments were critical of the proposed policy. They included questions about the council's remit, the scope of regulation, and the practicality of enforcing new rules. This is illustrated below:

“Totally agree, but how will it be policed/enforced? If not enforced then it’s just another waste of money.”

20. Consultees were then asked for their opinion on only being able to store and charge mobility vehicles in specific areas designated by the Council, as stipulated in the draft policy. Respondents were informed that this will normally be outside in a designated store. Where this is not possible, there will be indoor designated areas. Seven out of ten respondents (125 or 71.0%) agreed with this, as shown in the graph below:



21. When asked about this proposal, respondents comments could be grouped into the following themes:

Accessibility and Proximity. A number of responses emphasized the need for mobility scooters and storage to be very close to where people live, due to limited walking ability. Concerns expressed included how far individuals will have to walk to reach designated storage or charging areas, and the impact on independence.

"It is vital that storage should be within very close access. The reason people have mobility scooters is because of their ability to walk only very short distances."

Designated Storage and Charging. Some respondents asked questions about how the designated storage areas will be provided, maintained, and accessed safely and securely. Respondents asked for clarity on council responsibilities and practical arrangements.

"Will the council be providing safe outside storage for mobility scooters, plus outside sockets for charging?"

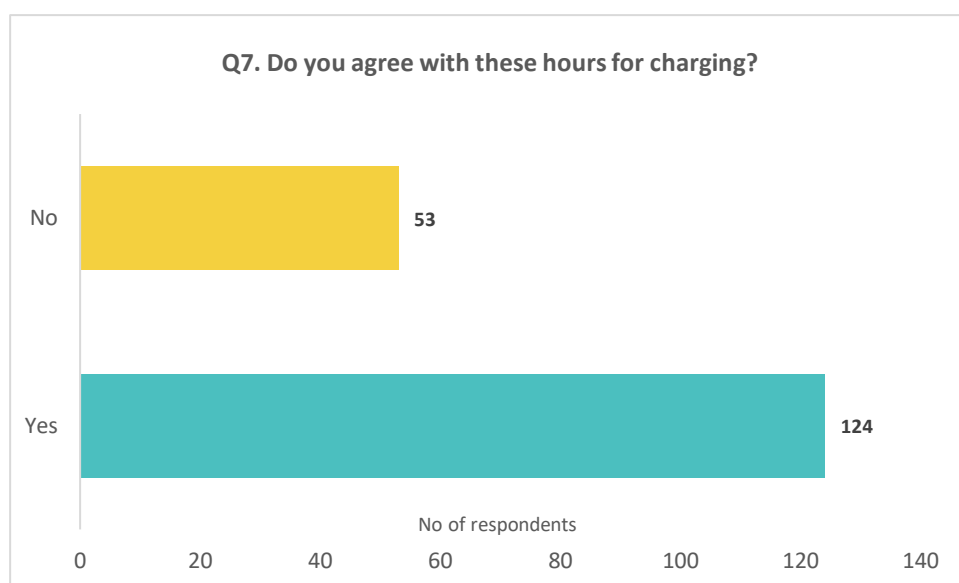
Policy restrictions and individual rights. Some respondents felt that the proposed policy restrictions are too rigid or intrusive, raising issues about personal choice, discrimination, and legal rights as illustrated below:

"No, this also means you have a say on where and how we do things in our own homes, this isn't something you can do..."

Safety, Security and Risks. Some residents expressed safety and security concerns. These include fire risks from charging, security of stored vehicles, and the vulnerability of disabled residents.

"How do people with mobility problems get to & from these charging areas? Will the security of the items be guaranteed?"

22. The next question on the survey asked respondents about potential restrictions on charging mobility vehicles. The policy proposes that charging of mobility vehicles will only be allowed during the day i.e. between the hours of 8am and 8pm. This is because residents are more likely to be aware if a fire starts if they are awake and so will be safer. Seven out of ten respondents (124 or 70.1%) agreed that vehicles should only be charged during the day (from 8am to 8pm). This is illustrated on the graph below:



23. When asked to comment, residents feedback could be grouped into four themes. These were:

Safety and charging concerns. Respondents were concerned about charging times, battery safety and fire risks. They also mentioned the practicality of charging schedules and the technical limitations of mobility vehicles, as illustrated here:

“The hours provided will mean that there will be more competition to charge scooters. Whilst I fully support the reason for the provision of limited hours, I believe by extending the time to 10pm it will reduce competition. Some models require a significant period of time to charge. This provides more flexibility for those users.”

Cost and Support Needs. Some mentioned the financial impact of charging a scooter during the day, as shown in the quote below:

“Most use is during the day with charging at/overnight, and most energy companies advertise cheaper electricity overnight or recharging during the lower demand hours, daytime charging goes against this.”

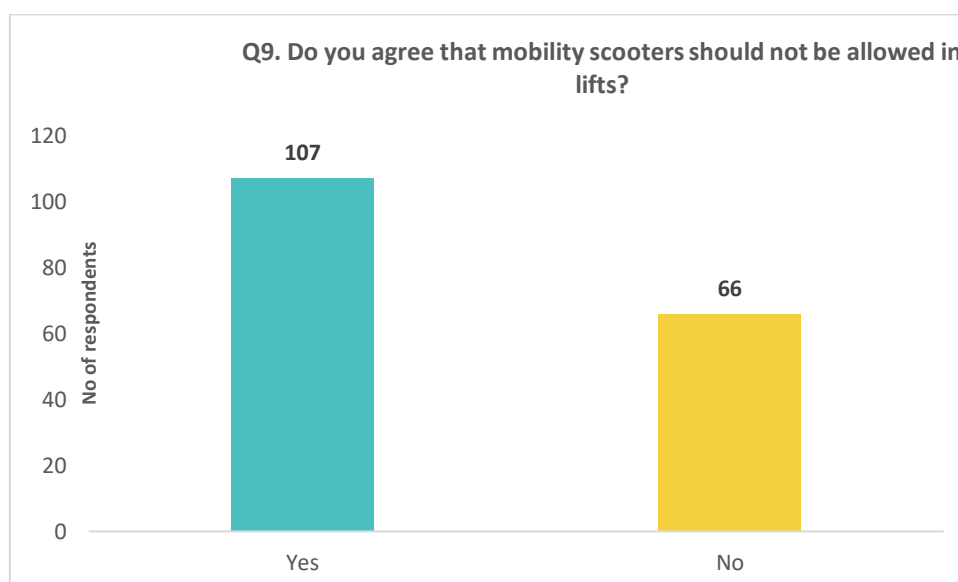
Accessibility and Independence. Highlighting concerns about independence, discrimination, and the impact having to charge their mobility vehicle during the day would have on their daily life, respondents expressed frustration about barriers to mobility and the risk of exclusion.

“So only at the most expensive times, in stores where nobody will be, and not able to get to quickly because they lack mobility, which is why they have a scooter in the first place....”

Policy and Regulation. A few were critical of the proposal, and wondered how it could be enforced. They also thought it could be viewed as over-regulatory.

“If vehicles are PAT tested and serviced regularly - this should not be a concern. I feel we are straying into Govt and Council over-regulation.”

24. Tenants were then informed about a proposal in the policy to prevent people on mobility vehicles using a lift in any of SKDC's housing. This is because mobility vehicles are classed as a fire risk, and their weight can cause damage to the lift. Six out of ten respondents (107 or 61.8%) agreed with this proposal. Four out of ten respondents didn't. This is shown below:



25. When asked to comment, consultees feedback could be grouped into the following themes:

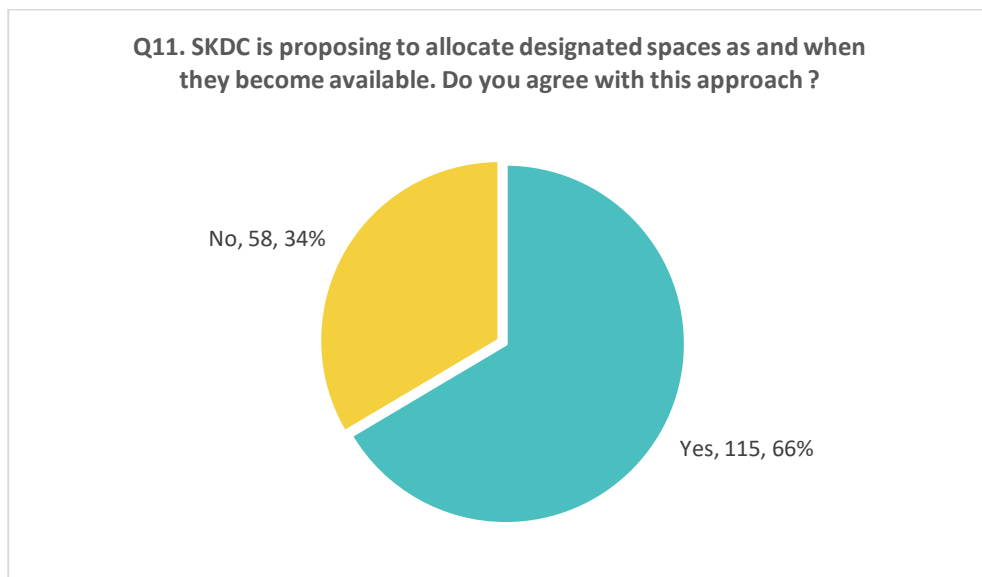
Safety and Charging Concerns. Respondents discussed the practicality and safety of using lifts, especially in the event of fires.

“If it caught fire there would be no escape, and the weight should be a cause for concern.”

Accessibility and Independence. This theme highlighted concerns about independence, access, and the impact a proposal like this would have on daily life. Respondents mentioned the barriers to mobility and the risk of exclusion that would result.

“.... this policy is however likely to discriminate against some residents purely because of where they live. Especially those who have the most severe mobility issues....”

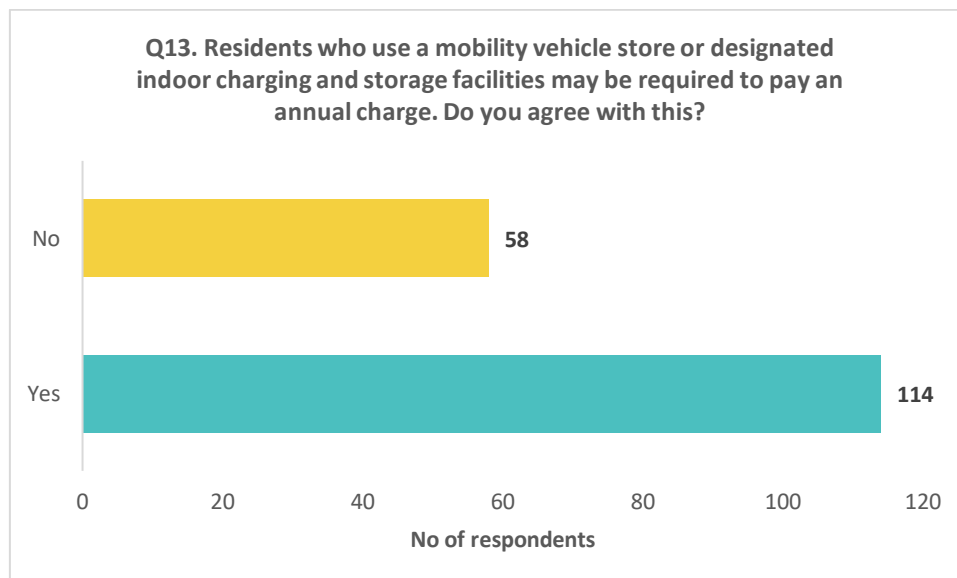
26. Respondents were then informed about how the Council intends to allocate any available designated mobility vehicle storage spaces. The Council is proposing to allocate any available spaces, as and when they become available, in date order of request. Two thirds of those asked (115 or 66%) agreed with this approach, as illustrated here:



27. When asked about this approach, the feedback from respondents was similar to that already received for other proposals in the policy. Concerns about maintaining independence and access were expressed, as were alternative scenarios for allocating designated spaces. These included allocating on need, not length of time someone has been waiting, as shown below:

“I do not agree with this approach at all. Those residents with the highest dependency on their mobility scooter should be prioritised. This policy will enable those who opt to have a scooter as a lifestyle choice to have priority over those most in need.”

28. Respondents were then asked about the possibility of having to pay. Residents who use a mobility vehicle outside store or designated indoor charging and storage facilities, may be required to pay an annual charge. Two thirds of respondents (114 or 66.3%) were in favour of this proposal. A third were not, as illustrated overleaf:

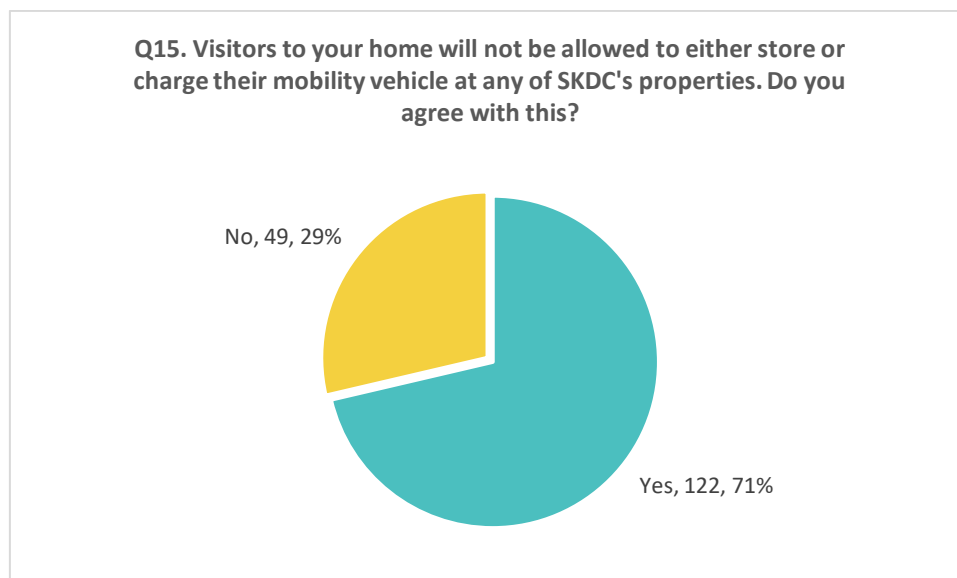


29. The comments received in relation to this proposal fell into one of two categories. Some respondents expressed concerns about how charging policies and costs could affect disabled residents, their independence, and their ability to use mobility vehicles. Others did not want to pay for a service they were not benefiting from. These are illustrated in the two quotes below:

“Disabled people are some of our poorer community members and should not be penalised any further because they are disabled.”

“The cost should be borne by those that use the facility, not everyone.”

30. The next question on the survey asked respondents for their opinion on a proposal to prohibit visitors from either storing or charging their mobility vehicle in any council property. When asked if they agreed with this proposal, seven out of ten respondents (122 or 71.3%) said that they did, as illustrated in the pie chart overleaf:



31. When asked to comment on this proposal, the feedback from respondents was focused on the rights of tenants to have visitors, and maintain an independent life:

“People with mobility problems have lives, they visit friends and friends visit them, this would be a further restriction to them.”

32. The next couple of questions asked respondents if they thought the draft policy was easy to read and understand. Two thirds of respondents (113 or 66.1%) thought the draft policy was easy to understand. When asked what changes they would like to see to the policy document, one respondent requested that the policy contain specific clauses for those in sheltered housing and those in general needs housing (flats) as their needs are different.

“The policy should be split up for people who live in places with communal areas and people who have other types of properties.”

33. Three quarters of respondents (123 or 73.2%) thought the draft policy was easy to read.

34. Question 21 on the survey asked respondents if they had any other comments they would like to make. The importance of mobility vehicles for independence, and concerns about proposals that may restrict access or create barriers for those with disabilities was a key theme. They also expressed concerns about the financial impact of new policies, including the costs of

registration and charging. Improvements to infrastructure were also mentioned e.g. charging points.

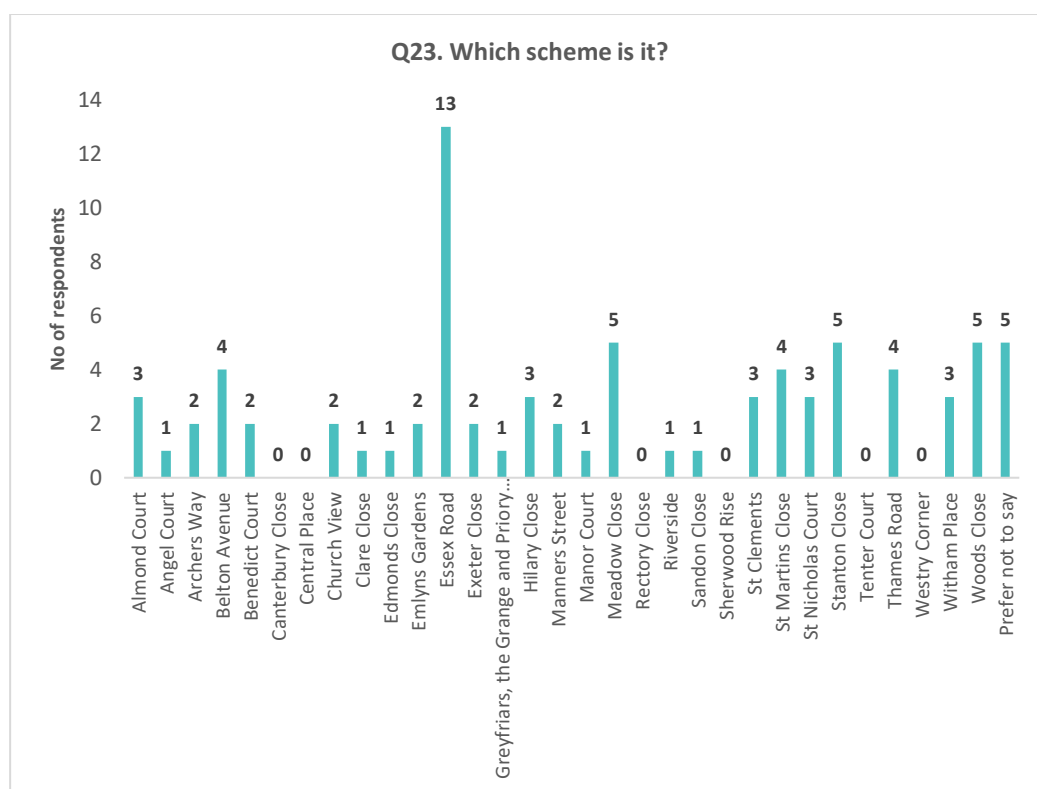
“It’s an absolutely disgraceful idea. We have to struggle enough now it’s basically taking away our rights as a disabled person.”

“I think you're just taking advantage of disabled people with mobility problems like me; life is hard enough without having to worry about all this both of my scooters have insurance and that should be sufficient and that's an extra expense as it is.”

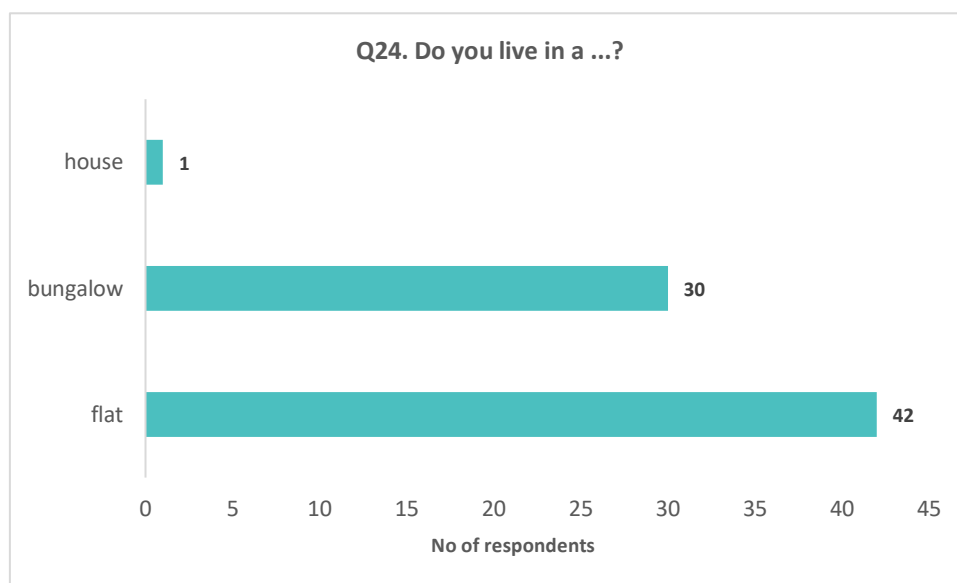
“If you were putting charging points that would help.”

35. Just under half (72 or 43.1%) were received from tenants in SKDC’s sheltered housing schemes and 95 (56.9%) from those in general needs housing.

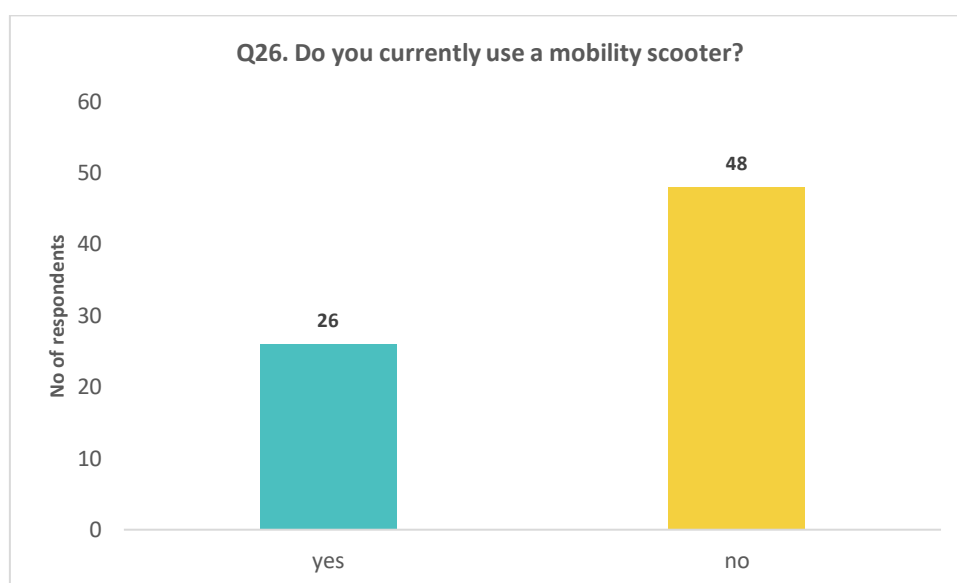
36. Responses were received from most sheltered housing schemes – as illustrated below:



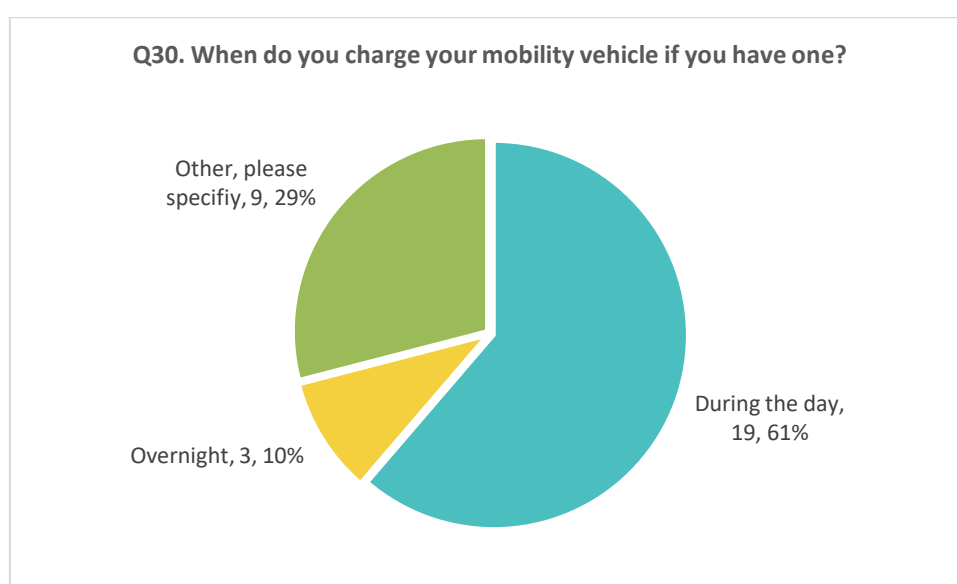
37. Responses were received from those living in bungalows as well as flats as illustrated below:



38. Just over a third of those answering (26 or 35.1%) said that they currently use a mobility scooter. Just under two thirds (48 or 64.9%) didn't.



39. Only two respondents said that they currently use an e bike or an e scooter.
40. When asked where they store and charge their mobility vehicle, most use a dedicated area. Dependent on the type of accommodation, it could be a spare bedroom, a shed, a designated space or a communal room in a sheltered housing complex.
41. The final question on the survey asked respondents when they tended to charge their mobility vehicle. Three fifths of respondents (19 or 61.3%) said that they charged their mobility vehicle during the day. Those choosing to answer other, please specify, did so because they charged their vehicle as and when it was required.



Conclusion

42. Undertaking this consultation has been very useful. It has provided lots of feedback on the proposals outlined in the Council's Mobility Vehicle Policy. In particular it has provided tenants with opportunities to communicate the important role mobility scooters play in maintaining their mobility and independence.

43. It should be noted that responses were received from tenants who currently own or lease a mobility scooter as well as those who don't use one. The difference in the distribution of responses between those who are "users" and "non users" should be borne in mind, as it is likely to have significantly affected how people have responded to the proposals. It would probably be worth undertaking some further analysis at some point to establish how much rates of support differ between these two groups of stakeholders.
44. The proposal to introduce designated areas on sheltered housing schemes where mobility scooters can be stored and charged could cause issues for those tenants with very limited mobility as they might not be able to get to/from the designated areas very easily. This was a real concern for some, and it might be beneficial to consider what mitigations could be put in place, if this proposal was to be implemented.
45. The challenge of balancing the needs of disabled tenants who rely on mobility vehicles to maintain access and independence whilst at the same time ensuring that all tenants are safe remains. Summarised by the following quotes from respondents:

"I understand the problems you are facing with fire potential but I think any policy should not penalise our vulnerable residents. I do not have a mobility vehicle but am quite happy to split charging cost equally between residents and happy for visitors to attend with mobility vehicles.

Disabled residents need to access their community and to have contact with friends and I do not support any moves to deny them this vital contact"

"I agree that the council needs the details of residents who own and use the scooters, and I also agree that certain rules are implemented so that the use and storage of the scooters do not impact on other residents and are kept safely. However, excessive regulations will make it difficult and costly for many residents to obtain the required 'proof'. Please keep it simple and straight forward"

46. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Prepared by Deb Wyles

Communication and Consultation

October 2025



