

Bus service reviews

Malmesbury Area Board, 4 September 2013

Ian White, Head of Service Passenger
Transport, Wiltshire Council

Background to reviews - 1

Council recognises the importance of good public transport

- Lifeline for many older people with no other way of getting around
- Independence for old and young
- Access to work, education, shops, medical facilities, cultural and recreational activities, and social contact
- Sustains rural communities
- Can help reduce congestion, pollution, emissions and use of scarce resources

In doing so, directly contributes to many of the Council's key aims

Background to reviews - 2

But;

- Pressure on public spending increasing year by year
- Financial Plan requirement to make savings
- Contract prices beginning to rise again

So;

- Ongoing programme of reviews looking for more financially sustainable ways of meeting needs (not necessarily a bus!)

Scope of reviews

- Include all services financially supported by the council
- Do not include commercial services (but there are NO commercial services in the Malmesbury area)
- Focus particularly on services which are poorly used or expensive to provide
- Currently consulting on proposed changes to services in north and west Wiltshire, but other supported services have been / will be reviewed in due course

North west Wiltshire review consultation

- Letters and information sheets sent out via Area Board managers
- Questionnaires for bus users – available on the bus and on website, and in libraries
- Asks for specific information on needs that would not be met
- Consultation closes 7 October
- Information from consultation considered before decision made
- Invite tenders to operate
- Implementation in April 2014

Services affected

- 17 services affected, mainly in Malmesbury, Chippenham and Wootton Bassett / Cricklade Community Areas (but also touching on Calne and Corsham)
- Includes all services in Malmesbury Community Area (services 30, 31, 41, 50, 52, 75, 76, 91, 92, 93, 95)
- Some cross into neighbouring counties; will agree changes (and funding split) with them

Current funding

Service group	Annual cost to public transport budget	Cost of linked statutory school transport
Andybus services 30, 31, 41, 92, 93	£503,600	£346,600
Dauntsey Vale service 91/91B	£122,500	£116,800
AD Rains services 50, 52	£60,000	£61,400
Coachstyle services 75 and 76	£26,000	£139,500
TOTAL	£712,000	£664,300

Current funding – points to note

- Public transport is integrated with statutory home to school / college transport – funding from education transport is vital to the affordability of the public transport network
- Achieved savings of £3million pa from efficiency and procurement since 2009/10, but evidence that costs again beginning to rise
- One third of passenger trips in Wiltshire are made by older persons' bus pass holders – and significantly more on less frequent rural routes

Proposals - 1

Strategic network routes (31 Malmesbury – Swindon; 92 Malmesbury – Chippenham)

Hourly service maintained, but some changes to routes to improve operational efficiency (31 omits Lea and Milbourne; 92 also serves Kington St Michael)

Other main routes from Malmesbury (41 Malmesbury – Yate; 93 Malmesbury – Cirencester)

Similar frequency, but some reductions to improve operational efficiency. 93 serves Lea to replace 31.

Proposals - 2

Malmesbury town bus

Half hourly service maintained, but serves Milbourne instead of Cowbridge (hourly) to replace 31 and 93

Dauntsey Vale service (91)

Completely revised to run between Chippenham and Dauntsey Vale only. Poorly used link to Malmesbury withdrawn.

Ashton Keynes (services 50 & 52)

Combined into single route to reduce costs and focus on main demands

Proposals - 3

Service 95 (Brinkworth – Chippenham via Bremhill)

To start from Bradenstoke as rarely if ever used from Brinkworth

Service 75 (Sherston – Chippenham, Fridays only)

Service 76 (Malmesbury – Bath, Wednesdays only)

Poorly used, but provide the only services from some communities.
Consultation seeks to establish needs and then identify most appropriate way of meeting these.

Does it have to be a bus?

- Not always!
- Consultation invites suggestions for alternative proposals – could be for alternative bus timetables, or could be more radical
- Are also some ‘gaps’ where an affordable alternative is needed
- Actively looking to expand community and voluntary transport through ‘Accelerate’ project
- Community Transport Development Fund available for one-off funding to develop and expand community transport schemes



Summary

- Bus services are important but can't escape the pressures on public sector funding
- North west Wiltshire consultation is open until 7 October; please reply if it affects you
- The challenge - do you have any ideas about how services can be made more cost-effective but still meet local needs?