

Review of Passenger Transport January 2016

Public consultation on the future provision of subsidised bus services in Wiltshire

This survey is part of the Council's Review of Passenger Transport (excluding taxis and trains) which seeks to consult widely on the actions, options, opportunities and developments around bus and community transport. It is not a detailed consultation on particular routes, timetables and destinations. We are keen to hear the views of residents, stakeholders and other interested parties.

Although passenger transport makes a strong contribution to the priorities that underpin Wiltshire Council's Business Plan, a key challenge in recent years has been how the service can continue to achieve these priorities in the face of growing pressures on local authority spending. This review is therefore being undertaken to help identify savings from passenger transport budgets.

Please note this is a consultation only about subsidised bus services, which are those services that are not viable for a bus company to run without Council funding. The majority of bus services that run within Salisbury and between major towns are operated as a commercial venture by the bus companies themselves without Council funding and so are not the subject of this review.

This review will be accompanied by continuing work to identify savings in other areas of the Council's passenger transport spending.

About you?

Any information provided is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be treated as strictly confidential.

1. Are you?

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
4476 (41.7%)	6124 (57.1%)	126 (1.2%)

2. What is your age range?

216 (2.0%)	under 18
233 (2.1%)	18-24
351 (3.2%)	25-34
640 (5.8%)	35-44
1223 (11.1%)	45-54
1928 (17.5%)	55-64
4005 (36.4%)	65-74
1919 (17.5%)	75-84
474 (4.3%)	85+

3. What is your post code? This will be used to map responses only. Please use capitals and a space such as in BA14 8JN

10289 (100.0%)

4. Do you consider yourself to be disabled in any way?

Yes
1987 (18.4%)

No
8806 (81.6%)

5. Is your mobility impaired in any way?

	No	Yes due to a disability	Yes due to my age
Is your mobility impaired in any way?	7590 (71.5%)	1315 (12.4%)	1714 (16.1%)

6. Do you own or do you have access to drive any car, van or motorcycle

Yes
6748 (61.8%)

No
4174 (38.2%)

Your use of buses in Wiltshire

7. How would you describe your use of bus services in Wiltshire? Please tick the statements closest to your view.

	At least 5 days a week	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	I never use the bus
To get to work	903 (18.8%)	587 (12.2%)	237 (4.9%)	238 (4.9%)	420 (8.7%)	2426 (50.4%)
To go shopping	861 (9.3%)	3082 (33.3%)	1675 (18.1%)	1282 (13.9%)	1275 (13.8%)	1068 (11.6%)
To visit family or friends	500 (7.8%)	1355 (21.3%)	1032 (16.2%)	882 (13.8%)	837 (13.1%)	1770 (27.8%)
To get to a doctors or medical appointments	493 (6.9%)	935 (13.1%)	562 (7.9%)	1480 (20.8%)	1798 (25.2%)	1863 (26.1%)
To get out and about	1040 (11.8%)	2328 (26.5%)	1374 (15.6%)	1388 (15.8%)	1587 (18.0%)	1081 (12.3%)

8. Do you use a concessionary bus pass? The concessionary fare scheme costs Wiltshire Council around £4.3m per year. Please note Wiltshire Council cannot introduce a small additional charge per journey for concessionary bus pass holders, or an annual administration charge for each pass as this is not allowed by Government legislation.

6864 (63.9%) Yes
3877 (36.1%) No

Bus Services

Last year Wiltshire Council spent £5.1 million on subsidising local bus services.

These are services that could not be operated without a Council subsidy, and account for around half of total bus mileage in the county. The highest proportion is spent on 'regular rural' services. These operate between two market towns, linking several villages along the route. Bus services in towns account for the next highest proportion of expenditure, followed by strategic town to town services, evening services, infrequent shoppers buses and Sunday services.

9. Bus services are currently grouped into a number of categories. Given the economic, social and environmental role that buses can play but also the Council's need to make substantial cost savings, which of the following categories do you feel it is most important for the Council to support?

	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Very unimportant
Strategic network routes linking the main towns within and beyond Wiltshire	6452 (61.9%)	3020 (29.0%)	624 (6.0%)	243 (2.3%)	81 (0.8%)
Town services (running entirely within a town or city linking the main housing areas and the centre)	4862 (47.7%)	3580 (35.1%)	1194 (11.7%)	406 (4.0%)	146 (1.4%)
Evening services (those which operate after 7pm)	2030 (20.6%)	3446 (35.0%)	2832 (28.8%)	1245 (12.7%)	285 (2.9%)
Sunday and Bank holiday services	1493 (16.1%)	2939 (31.7%)	3007 (32.4%)	1439 (15.5%)	394 (4.2%)
Rural regular services (linking smaller towns and rural areas, generally with at least 4 journeys in each direction on 5 days a week)	6768 (63.9%)	2951 (27.8%)	622 (5.9%)	175 (1.7%)	83 (0.8%)
Rural infrequent services that serve rural areas generally on only certain days of the week	4312 (42.9%)	3398 (33.8%)	1535 (15.3%)	551 (5.5%)	252 (2.5%)

Options for savings

The Council has consulted with stakeholders and partners and used its own experience and that of other councils to develop a number of options to make savings. As there will be many combinations of bus service changes possible the Council has not determined what these may be and is asking for responses to the options below to guide their decisions. You can refer to the map, table and documents on the Council's website showing which routes would be affected.

Option 1 Withdraw funding for all supported evening services

Most evening buses in Wiltshire (those running after 7.00pm) are currently funded by the Council. 11 routes are supported, with 330,000 passengers journeys a year subsidised by the Council. Withdrawal of funding for these services would save around £639,000 a year.

10. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at this area to find savings?

Yes
6016 (56.6%)

No
4609 (43.4%)

11. If the Council was to remove the subsidy for evening services which meant that they were not able to continue to operate how would this personally affect you?

5409 (50.3%) It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service

3189 (29.6%) I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements

1335 (12.4%) I would be affected by this quite a lot

827 (7.7%) This would have a big impact on me personally

Option 2 Withdraw funding for all supported Sunday and public holiday services

Most buses in Wiltshire that run on Sundays and public holidays are currently funded by the Council. 8 routes are supported, with the Council subsidising around 145,000 passenger journeys a year. Withdrawal of funding for these services would save around £165,000 a year.

12. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at this area to find savings?

Yes	No
6725 (63.0%)	3955 (37.0%)

13. If the Council was to remove the subsidy for Sunday services which meant that they were not able to continue to operate how would this personally affect you?

5525 (51.6%)	It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service
3405 (31.8%)	I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements
1169 (10.9%)	I would be affected by this quite a lot
615 (5.7%)	This would have a big impact on me personally

Option 3 Reduce the hourly services Mon-Fri to a two hourly service on the strategic bus network

The strategic bus network links the small market towns and larger villages in Wiltshire with the nearest large town, with services operating at least every hour on Mondays to Fridays. 10 routes are part-funded, and 3 routes (Malmesbury - Swindon, Malmesbury - Chippenham and Devizes - Salisbury) are entirely funded by the Council. The Council subsidises around 460,000 passenger journeys a year. To reduce the service to a two hourly frequency during the daytime would save around £430,000 a year.

14. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at this area to find savings?

Yes	No
5186 (48.2%)	5565 (51.8%)

15. If the Council was to remove the subsidy for these services which meant that they were not able to continue to operate how would this personally affect you?

3479 (32.2%)	It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service
3381 (31.3%)	I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements
2474 (22.9%)	I would be affected by this quite a lot
1469 (13.6%)	This would have a big impact on me personally

Rural Bus services

The Council currently spends over £2 million a year subsidising services on 57 rural routes. Half of these are regular services providing up to 4 or 5 buses a day in each direction linking the villages to their nearest town, while the remainder are infrequent services usually operating only on certain days of the week to a local market. The Council subsidises around 960,000 passenger journeys a year on rural bus services.

Option 4 Reduce rural bus services to 2-3 buses a day on regular routes and withdraw most of the infrequent services except those that are the only service to a group of villages.

As the savings would depend on using one bus and driver to operate two routes, journeys would not necessarily be conveniently timed. This option would save around £1.19 million a year

16. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at this area to find savings?
- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes | No |
| 4006 (37.5%) | 6679 (62.5%) |
17. If the Council was to reduce the subsidy for rural bus services which meant that they were able to continue to operate but at a much reduced frequency - say only 2 to 3 journeys a day how would this personally affect you?
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 3495 (32.5%) | It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service |
| 3096 (28.8%) | I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements |
| 2621 (24.4%) | I would be affected by this quite a lot |
| 1546 (14.4%) | This would have a big impact on me personally |

Town bus services

The Council currently spends £1.01 million a year to fund the provision of hourly bus services linking the housing estates in Bradford on Avon, Calne, Corsham, Devizes, Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster with the centres of those towns. It also part funds the provision of such services in Salisbury, Chippenham and Marlborough at times when the bus companies would not otherwise run them. Around 650,000 passenger journeys a year are made using these services.

Option 5 Reduce town bus services to 2-3 buses a day. Existing buses used by pupils within Warminster, Devizes, Bradford on Avon and Melksham would be retained

As the savings would depend on using one bus and driver to operate two routes, journeys would not necessarily be conveniently timed. However, buses used by pupils living within Warminster, Devizes, Bradford on Avon and Melksham to travel to/from school would be retained.

This option would save around £460,000 a year.

18. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at this area to find savings?
- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Yes | No |
| 5306 (51.0%) | 5098 (49.0%) |
19. If the Council was to reduce the subsidy for town services which meant that they were able to continue to operate but at a much reduced frequency - say only 2 to 3 journeys a day how would this personally affect you?
- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 4913 (46.4%) | It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service |
| 2584 (24.4%) | I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements |
| 1977 (18.7%) | I would be affected by this quite a lot |
| 1109 (10.5%) | This would have a big impact on me personally |

Option 6 Withdraw all funding for all Council subsidised services

Around half of all bus services in Wiltshire are subsidised by the Council, and in total these subsidised services carry over 2.5 million passengers a year. Withdrawing all funding for these services would save £5.1 million a year.

20. Given the level of subsidy and the numbers who use this service would you support the Council looking at withdrawing funding to find savings if a small proportion of the savings were reallocated to community transport initiatives, health transport options, etc?

Yes
2388 (22.4%)

No
8260 (77.6%)

21. If the Council was to reduce the subsidy for all services how would this personally affect you?

- 1558 (14.5%) It wouldn't affect me at all, as I rarely, if ever use such a service
- 2717 (25.2%) I might be affected but could probably make alternative arrangements
- 3588 (33.3%) I would be affected by this quite a lot
- 2899 (26.9%) This would have a big impact on me personally

22. In order to keep as many of the existing subsidised services running as possible Wiltshire Council is investigating if other organisations, individuals and communities might be able to fund, or even operate elements of some bus routes. This might for example include paying for services in villages on routes or helping to fund extra journeys. Given this which of the following statements do you agree with?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
This is a great idea	3655 (37.8%)	3233 (33.5%)	2776 (28.7%)
If there aren't enough passengers to enable a bus service to run without subsidy then it should go.	1703 (17.8%)	2567 (26.8%)	5293 (55.3%)
I am for protecting these services even if it means I have to pay more through local taxes etc.	6012 (59.0%)	2508 (24.6%)	1674 (16.4%)
The Council and other public bodies should look to reconfigure the services they provide (social care, health, etc) so people don't have to travel.	4189 (43.3%)	3408 (35.2%)	2084 (21.5%)
It's up to local communities to see if they can raise the necessary funds themselves.	917 (9.4%)	2858 (29.4%)	5940 (61.1%)

Community and Voluntary transport schemes

In 2014/15 the Council spent £381,000 supporting community and voluntary transport schemes. There are 15 community minibus groups providing services in their area for those who are unable to use ordinary bus services and also over 40 Link schemes which covers 98% of rural households, providing transport in the volunteers' own car. Wiltshire Council works with Community First to administer such schemes is on its behalf. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact Community First at www.communityfirst.org.uk

23. Have you ever heard of or used a community or voluntary transport scheme in Wiltshire?

Never heard of them	Heard of them but never used them	I have used a scheme
2101 (19.3%)	6872 (63.2%)	1908 (17.5%)

24. If you used a scheme what did you think of it?

I would recommend it	OK but no substitute for buses	It wasn't that good	Don't know
1067 (56.8%)	698 (37.1%)	104 (5.5%)	11 (0.6%)

Finally

25. This is a challenging review against a backdrop of severe financial constraints. Do you have any further comments or suggestions that will help us? Please use this question to provide any further details on how the options would have an impact on you personally.

6859 (100.0%)

If you need any further information about the survey, please contact Wiltshire Council's customer services team on 0300 456 0100 or email the Council's passenger transport unit at passengertransport@wiltshire.gov.uk

Thank you for taking part in this survey

If you are filling out this out by hand then please send your completed survey by post to:

Public Transport Survey
Passenger Transport Unit
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Or return to your local library or main Council office

Alternatively if you have access to a computer scanner, please scan all pages of the completed form and email it to us at passengertransport@wiltshire.gov.uk