

Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011- 2026

Public Transport Strategy



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March 2011

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ISBN:

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1 Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1** This document sets out the council's long term strategy and short term delivery plan for public transport. It forms an integral and important part of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011-2026, but can also be read in its own right, summarising the contribution that public transport makes to the council's overall transport strategy.
- 1.2** Because of the uncertainties referred to in LTP3, the strategy and delivery plan will be kept under review. It is intended that the one-year delivery plan will be revised when the three year rolling implementation plans for the LTP3 are developed starting in 2011/12.

Context

- 1.3** It is important to see public transport as a part of the council's overall transport strategy, in the context of what it can contribute to wider agendas. The context in which the council's transport strategies have been developed is described in more detail in the main LTP3 document, but the following is a brief summary;

National context

- 1.4** The DfT's 'Guidance on Local Transport Plans' (July 2009) sets out the following five overarching national transport goals:
- support economic growth
 - reduce carbon emissions
 - promote equality of opportunity
 - contribute to better safety, security and health
 - improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.
- 1.5** In addition, the coalition government has highlighted its key overarching transport priorities as helping the economy grow and tackling carbon emissions, with other important priorities being road safety, affordability, accessibility and health and wellbeing.

Local context

- 1.6** There are various planning and strategy documents which set the context for local transport. These include:
- 1.7** **Local Development Framework (LDF)** – following the revocation of regional spatial strategies by the government, this will provide the strategic policy framework to guide development in Wiltshire. The LDF is a portfolio of planning documents including the core strategy, which sets out the general spatial vision and objectives, and strategic site allocations for new development.
- 1.8** **Local Enterprise Partnerships** – these are being proposed by the government as a successor to the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), to allow local areas the opportunity to take control of their future economic development. They are intended to be partnerships between local authorities and the business community to drive local economic growth.

1.9 Local planning and development strategies – ‘Salisbury Vision’, ‘Vision for Chippenham’ and ‘Transforming Trowbridge’ provide a framework for the strategic development of the three main towns. The New Forest National Park and the three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that include parts of Wiltshire each have their own management plans which include transport objectives and policies.

1.10 Community Plan – the community plan sets out the way in which the council will work with other partners and with local communities to achieve shared ambitions for the future of Wiltshire. The Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026 includes the following key priorities;

- creating an economy that is fit for the future
- reducing disadvantage and inequalities
- tackling the causes and effects of climate change.

1.11 The Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW) acts as the delivery mechanism for the community plan, which is also reflected in the council’s corporate goals.

2 Challenges and Opportunities

Introduction

- 2.1** Chapter 3 of the LTP3 Strategy document outlines the opportunities and challenges influencing the development of the council's transport strategy as a whole. This section provides more detail of those that affect the public transport strategy in particular.
- 2.2** In summary, service provision and performance during the previous LTP period has been relatively good, but the council now faces massive challenges for the future, in particular the tension between increasing demands, rising costs and diminishing funding. The council has recognised the need for a fundamental review of passenger transport policy and provision, which was carried out during 2009/10 and concluded that there need to be changes to both policy and delivery to meet these challenges. These are incorporated into the long term strategy below and are developed further through the implementation plan.

Current services

Buses

- 2.3** Bus services are provided by many different companies, with no single dominant operator. Almost half of bus service mileage needs financial support and is run under contract to the council, and the proportion of commercially operated service has diminished in recent years due to national economic and structural pressures. This is despite significant growth in bus use, which increased from 8.7 million passenger trips per annum in 2003/4 to 12.3 million in 2008/9 before falling back to 10.4 million in 2009/10 as a result of the recession. Much of the growth has been due to the introduction of free travel for older people, but development of the Park & Ride services in Salisbury, and partnership schemes with the main operators to improve ridership on their commercial services, such as the Kickstart improvements to the Chippenham – Swindon route, the Salisbury Area and Activ8 Quality Partnerships, have also contributed to the growth.
- 2.4** The frequency and coverage of bus services across the county remains relatively good for a rural area, and is still better than it was before the introduction of rural bus subsidy grant in 1998/99. However, due to the steadily rising costs of bus service operation, which have affected all parts of the UK, and the recent reductions in the extent of commercial bus operation, there have been reductions to services in some areas over the past few years. The proportion of rural households with access to an hourly or better weekday daytime service has however only fallen from 53% to 51% and the proportion with at least a daily weekday daytime service has remained at 90%.
- 2.5** The council has, however, had to substantially increase the funding it allocates to bus service support, and spending on contracted services (excluding Park & Ride and demand responsive services) has risen from £3.7 million in 2006/7 to £4.7 million in 2009/10. Service provision in rural areas is maximised by integration wherever possible with school and college transport, which is critical for the financial viability of most services. It can, however, sometimes make services less attractive for other users, and leads to criticism that services at non-school times are operated by larger vehicles than necessary.
- 2.6** The quality of bus travel has also improved, particularly on the major routes, due to investment by the commercial operators in new low floor vehicles and the council's programme of investment in bus stop and shelter upgrades on the key network. High bus fares remain a major source of concern, except for older and disabled people who are now entitled to free travel, and bus fares have continued to rise at a rate faster than inflation in line with national

trends. The council administers the national free travel scheme, and in addition to the statutory entitlements, provides companion passes for those who are unable to travel on their own, and has until now allowed free travel before 0930 (except on certain services). Taxi vouchers are also available as an alternative to the free bus pass for people who have to travel in a wheelchair.

Demand responsive transport

2.7 Wiltshire has over the past 10 years been at the forefront of developments in demand responsive transport, with a range of services, including the Wigglybus, Hopper and various taxi-based schemes, being set up following successful bids for government funding. These were reviewed in 2006, following the end of the government grants, and have since been re-branded under the Connect 2 Wiltshire banner. Although popular with users, and in general relatively cost-effective compared to demand responsive services elsewhere, they remain relatively expensive to operate but can nonetheless still represent the most cost-effective way of providing a given level of service in areas of low demand.

Community and voluntary transport

2.8 Community transport is defined here as transport that is operated by a community or voluntary organisation. In Wiltshire there are currently two main types of scheme: community transport minibus schemes, and 'social car' schemes where volunteers provide lifts for people in need using their own private car.

2.9 There are currently 24 community minibus schemes in the county, carrying about 250,000 single passenger trips a year. The majority are small scale and locally based, providing a service predominantly for older and less able residents, including those who have to travel in a wheelchair, who can not, or who find it difficult to, use ordinary public transport. Typical services are 'group hire', taking groups of residents to various activities such as luncheon clubs or days out, and regular shopping excursions to local towns. A few of the minibus schemes provide scheduled bus services that anyone can use, usually on a relatively infrequent basis, complementing other bus services in the area. Community First provide countywide support for existing and developing schemes.

2.10 There is an extensive network of over 40 'Link' good neighbour schemes in Wiltshire, providing, as part of their 'good neighbour' remit, social car coverage to 98% of rural households. Each scheme is run as an independent local charity, with countywide support and coordination provided by Community First. The schemes together carry out around 50,000 transport 'tasks' a year.

2.11 Community First also run the countywide 'Wheels to Work' scheme, which provides affordable moped hire for predominantly young people who would otherwise not be able to access work, training or further education. The scheme was set up with funding from the RDA, but, in common with schemes elsewhere in the UK, has found it difficult to secure alternative funding sources since this came to an end. Capacity to meet requests for transport is constrained by availability of funding, and unless alternative funding sources can be found the service is likely to cease in April 2011.

2.12 The council in 2010/11 provided £330,000 of funding for community transport, including grants to community bus and Link schemes and the Wheels to Work scheme, and funding for Community First's crucial development and support role.

Rail

- 2.13** Passenger trains in Wiltshire are operated by First Great Western and Stagecoach South West Trains under franchise arrangements with central government that continue until 2016 and 2017 respectively. Some of the concerns highlighted in the previous LTP2 public transport strategy have since been met by the rail industry:
- The Bristol – Waterloo train service through west Wiltshire has been retained as part of the South West Trains franchise.
 - Train lengths on the Cardiff – Portsmouth route have been returned to three cars as the two-car trains introduced in 2006 were found to have insufficient capacity.
 - Passenger facilities have been improved at Westbury, Trowbridge and Avoncliff stations.
 - Automatic ticket barriers have been introduced at Salisbury station
 - The train service between Salisbury and Exeter has been enhanced with the provision of Waterloo – Exeter trains at an hourly frequency.
 - Most stations in Wiltshire are enjoying the highest, or near the highest, level of train service ever provided, in terms of frequency. The exceptions are Melksham, Chippenham (which has lost most Melksham trains) and Dilton Marsh.
- 2.14** The number of passengers using Wiltshire stations continued to increase up to 2008. In summer 2009, passenger numbers fell compared with summer 2008 as a result of the recession, but the fall was only two per cent and 2009 was still the second highest summer total.
- 2.15** The council is a member of the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership, supporting the line from Bristol to Weymouth and the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership, supporting the Salisbury to Southampton and Eastleigh lines. These rail partnerships work with the rail industry to promote usage of the respective lines, encourage community involvement in local station improvements and bring local knowledge to the process of train service planning.
- 2.16** Currently, the main challenges facing Wiltshire's railway are as follows:
- The train service provided between Westbury and Swindon via Melksham was reduced in 2006 so that it does little more than meet legal requirements. Wiltshire Council believes that a much better service could be justified in the context of the franchise and would have benefits for economic development and sustainable transport. The council continues to take every opportunity to put this case forward to the Department for Transport (DfT), which specifies and funds the franchise. The council has also purchased former railway land adjacent to Melksham station to safeguard its availability for future station and interchange improvements when an improved train service is provided.
 - Overcrowding at peak times continues to be an issue, particularly on the Bristol to Weymouth route where summer weekend and bank holiday peak trains can be so full that passengers are left behind and the train company has to hire road coaches to supplement them.
 - At Salisbury station, South West Trains closed the northern entrance to passengers when automatic ticket barriers were introduced. The council continues to aspire to creating a bus /rail interchange focused on Fisherton Street and utilising this entrance as there is no suitable location for interchange with buses on the southern side of the station.
 - The prospect of opening or re-opening stations in Wiltshire is very much dependent upon support from the rail industry, both for funding and provision of appropriate train services.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

- 2.17** Taxis and private hire vehicles are an important part of the public transport network, playing a variety of roles in an integrated transport system. They can be particularly important in providing a flexible, demand responsive service at times or in places where a conventional bus or rail service is not available; acting as feeder services to the rail and bus networks, and providing door-to-door transport for people with mobility impairments or who need to carry heavy or bulky luggage. The council also makes extensive use of them for transport of schoolchildren and social care clients, and has encouraged operators to bid for contracts to provide taxi-based Connect 2 Wiltshire services.
- 2.18** There are currently 996 licensed taxi and private hire cars in Wiltshire. Licensing became a function of the new unitary Wiltshire Council in 2009, and steps have been taken to harmonise the differing licensing arrangements inherited from the previous district councils.

Publicity and information

- 2.19** The council is an active member of the regional partnership that provides the 'traveline' telephone enquiry service and travel information website. It also issues area timetable booklets and other information leaflets, and maintains timetable displays at over 300 bus stops, to complement the information provided by the commercial operators and to fulfil its obligation to make sure that adequate local bus service information is available. Real time passenger information displays have been installed at over 200 stops in Salisbury and selected inter-urban routes. The council's bus information strategy was adopted in 2003, and is currently being reviewed.

Education, social care and health transport

- 2.20** Free home-to-school transport is provided for 9,000 entitled children, including 800 with special educational needs, in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, 1,600 sixth form and college students take advantage of the council's post-16 transport scheme. Home to school and college transport requirements are closely integrated with public transport service planning to maximise the availability of services to the public and make best overall use of council funding.
- 2.21** Public transport services are also widely used by schoolchildren who are not entitled to free transport. However, funding is not available to significantly extend such provision or to provide transport to 'parental choice' schools.
- 2.22** The council's passenger transport unit arranges transport for over 1,000 social care clients a year, using a mixture of taxi and private hire cars, minibuses and voluntary drivers. Transport requirements will change over the next few years as personalised care plans and personal budgets give clients more say over the type and location of the activities they attend. There will be an increasing reliance on the use of public transport services (where available) and a potential issue about how to provide cost-effective access to activities where demand is dispersed and public transport options not available.
- 2.23** Similar issues exist with providing access to health services. The NHS is required to provide transport to hospital for patients who meet criteria for 'medical need', and to refund reasonable transport costs for patients who qualify under the 'Hospital Costs' scheme. Public transport routes are planned taking the location of health services into account, but the demand is rarely sufficient to justify additional service provision and it can be difficult to re-route existing services past new or relocated health facilities without disadvantaging other users. Link schemes often offer the most effective way of providing access for the relatively small number

of people who can not access hospitals or surgeries by other means, but changes in the locations of health service provision and the growth of patient choice is putting an increasing strain on volunteer resources.

Challenges, opportunities and risks

2.24 Table 2.1 summarises the key issues relevant to developing the public transport strategy, and draws on the general analysis in chapter 3 of the LTP3 Strategy document, and the baseline report for the 2009/10 passenger transport review.

Table 2.1 Challenges, opportunities and risks

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks
Maintaining adequate levels of service with reduced funding	Locate and design new developments and facilities / services to permit them to be served by financially sustainable public transport and to improve the viability of existing services	Transport operating costs are likely to continue to increase faster than inflation
Balancing higher costs of low emission buses with financial viability of services	Use new technology to provide improved public transport information and offer new fares and ticketing options	Recent bus designs with less polluting engines and which are wheelchair accessible are less fuel efficient and emit more CO ₂
Improving punctuality and reliability of bus services as traffic volumes rise	Higher fuel costs and growing environmental awareness may encourage use of public transport	Higher cost of wheelchair accessible vehicles required by DDA could make less well used routes less viable
Providing attractive and financially sustainable public transport to new developments	Demand management (e.g. parking charges) and traffic management (e.g. bus lanes or signal priority) can encourage greater public transport use	Limited ability to influence commercial bus operators, or railway companies
Improving public transport infrastructure with reduced funding	Concessionary bus pass for older and disabled people has improved access for many, and encouraged new attitudes to bus travel	High bus and rail fares are a deterrent to use
Meeting the transport and access needs of an increasing elderly population	Work in partnership with bus and rail operators to increase use of public transport services	Lack of funding and staff time will limit ability to improve quality or quantity of service, and undermine credibility of partnership working
Providing cost-effective transport for demands that are increasingly dispersed in time and space	Develop new approach to developer funding that allows it to be used more effectively to support strategic public transport objectives	

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks
	New legislation allows more flexibility in operating community transport services	
	Area Boards provide framework for encouraging local communities to play a greater role in meeting their own transport and access needs through development of community transport	

Passenger transport review

2.25 Recognising the growing pressures on the passenger transport service and the need for change given the likelihood of reductions in public expenditure, the council commissioned a major review of the whole service. This was carried out in 2009/10, and has been referred to earlier. The overall conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- the service has performed relatively well to date; however, the challenges of the future, and particularly the anticipated requirement for major reductions in public spending, mean that new approaches will be needed for the future.
- the need for passenger transport services will continue to grow, and the gap between demand and resources will inevitably widen.
- if major financial savings are required these could not be achieved by efficiencies alone and will need reductions in services as well.
- passenger transport should continue to play a key role in achieving national and local objectives, but policies and strategies will need to take a realistic view of what can be achieved within the resources available.

2.26 After considering a range of options for the future, a major project has commenced to transform delivery of the service. This includes:

- a review of all transport policies, including a clearer focus on how they contribute to corporate and LTP objectives.
- a re-planning of the way the service is delivered, including developing more strategic relationships with transport operators, reshaping the bus network and reviewing the bus information strategy.
- developing the strategy for procuring transport services, including examining the opportunities for an enhanced role for community transport.
- reviewing the scope for internal efficiencies in the delivery of the service.

2.27 The long term strategy and delivery plan proposed in this strategy forms a major part of implementing the recommendations of the review.

3 Overall Strategy

Preferred strategic options

- 3.1** Strategic options for public transport (bus and rail) were developed and assessed alongside those for other elements of the overall transport strategy, as described in chapter 5 of the LTP Strategy document. The preferred strategic options selected from this process are shown in Table 3.1 below.
- 3.2** In the case of the ‘buses’ options, although the ‘radical’ option scored highest for delivery, the appraisal showed that the cost to the council would be very high, and would require a significant increase in annual revenue funding compared to the current budget. In view of the likely significant reductions in local government funding over the next few years, it is considered that to adopt this approach would not be sustainable. Even the ‘balanced’ option, selected as the preferred approach, will require high levels of ongoing revenue support which may, given the pressures on funding, not be available. The strategy set out below is therefore intended to ensure that best use is made of available resources from all sources, and to give the flexibility to respond to possible changes in funding during the plan period.

Table 3.1 Preferred options

	Preferred option	Broad description
Bus	Balanced	Seek to retain overall levels of service that meet demand within available resources, meeting accessibility needs for those without private transport and making a contribution towards sustainable transport objectives
Rail	Balanced	Increase rail connectivity through provision of bus-rail links and assist with the implementation of some new stations. Support the function of rail stations as transport hubs and proactively work with partners to introduce service and corridor improvements particularly between the Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge. Cover the administration costs of community rail partnerships and where appropriate and necessary, safeguard and purchase land for rail improvements

Goals and objectives for the public transport strategy

- 3.3** The goals and strategic objectives for the overall transport strategy are set out in chapter 5 of the LTP3 Strategy document. From these, the following have been selected as being those to which the ‘balanced’ options for public transport can make the greatest contribution:

Table 3.2 Contribution to national goals

National transport goals	Contribution of public transport strategy
Improve quality of life (by enabling people to enjoy access to a range of goods, services, people and places)	Important
Promote equality of opportunity	Important
Support economic growth	Important
Reduce carbon emissions	Important

National transport goals	Contribution of public transport strategy
Contribute to better safety, security and health	Limited

Table 3.3 Contribution to LTP objectives

Strategic transport objectives	Contribution of public transport strategy
SO1 – to support and help improve the vitality, viability and resilience of Wiltshire’s economy and market towns	Important
SO2 – to provide, support and/or promote a choice of sustainable transport alternatives including walking, cycling, buses and rail	Important
SO5 - to improve sustainable access to a full range of opportunities particularly for those people without access to a car	Important
SO11 – to reduce the level of air pollutant and climate change emissions from transport	Important
SO12 – to support planned growth in Wiltshire and ensure that new developments adequately provide for their sustainable transport requirements and mitigate their traffic impacts	Important
SO15 – to reduce barriers to transport and access for people with disabilities and mobility impairment	Important
SO3 – to reduce the impact of traffic on people’s quality of life and Wiltshire’s built and natural environment	Limited
SO8 – to improve safety for all road users and to reduce the number of casualties on Wiltshire’s roads	Limited
SO13 – to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car	Limited
SO14 – to promote travel modes that are beneficial to health	Limited
SO16 – to improve the resilience of the transport system to impacts such as adverse weather, climate change and peak oil	Limited
SO17 – to improve access to Wiltshire’s countryside	Limited
SO18 – to enhance the journey experience of transport users	Limited

The 'vision for 2026' and long term strategy

3.4 Public transport is a vital part of the overall transport strategy and, as has been demonstrated above, can make a major contribution to many important national and local goals. The council's vision for 2026 is for a public transport system that provides the level of access that people across the county need in order to allow them to lead satisfying and fulfilling lives, and that in and between the main centres of population provides an attractive alternative to the private car that is able to make a major contribution to achieving sustainable transport objectives. To achieve this, there should be;

- Improved rail services that meet local and long distance travel needs.
- Frequent, attractive and reliable urban and inter-urban bus services linking the main centres of population and economic activity within and outside the county.
- Good access for rural residents to a wide range of services, facilities and opportunities, provided by the most cost-effective means and with local communities playing a larger role in identifying and satisfying the needs of their area.
- Effective interchange between all elements of the transport network, including physical access, suitable waiting and transfer facilities, timing, fares and ticketing, and reliability.
- Removal of the barriers that limit the ability of disabled and mobility impaired people to use the transport network.
- Greater use of low emission vehicles and renewable energy sources.
- Transport services that are effectively promoted and marketed to increase their use and maximise the benefits of the investment made in them.

3.5 However, in most of the county the potential for commercial public transport operation is currently limited and the continued existence of adequate levels of service in many areas will continue, for the foreseeable future, to require significant amounts of ongoing revenue funding. In view of the pressures on public spending and the financial pressures on operators that are likely to continue well into the LTP3 period, there is a need for realism about what can be achieved in the short to medium term. The long term strategy therefore focuses on making best use of resources, working in partnership, and setting in place procedures that will allow decisions on what services should be supported to be made in the light of availability of funding, while retaining the capability to move towards achieving the long term vision as and when circumstances permit.

3.6 The approach that is proposed here in the long term strategy is intended to evolve over time through discussions with operators and other stakeholders and to reflect changing circumstances, and will be implemented through a series of shorter term delivery plans.

Table 3.4 Long-term strategy

Bus	The council will seek to promote the viability of commercial bus operation particularly on main inter-urban corridors and in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge, so that revenue support funding can be targeted at areas where commercial operation is less likely.
	The existing bus network will be reviewed, with the operators, to determine the best match between demand and need for travel and available resources. A hierarchy of routes will be developed, distinguishing between strategic routes (that link major centres within and outside Wiltshire) and local routes (that link to local centres and provide access for residents to local services).
	Local service networks will be re-planned in consultation with the Area Boards, users and local transport providers so that they can meet local needs in the most cost-effective way.

	<p>The criteria for financial support will be reviewed to align more closely with corporate and LTP objectives, and to allow a more robust prioritisation of services against objectives and resource availability.</p>
	<p>Fares on supported services will be set so as to strike a balance between the need to cover a reasonable proportion of costs, and affordability to the user. Operators of commercial services will be encouraged to make affordable fares available.</p>
	<p>The council will work with operators to improve the punctuality and reliability of services, including identifying actions that the council could take to reduce delays and improve the consistency of journey times.</p>
	<p>The council will encourage operators of both commercial and supported services to plan in advance for the introduction of low floor vehicles before these become a mandatory requirement, so as to bring benefits for passengers at an earlier date and to minimise the risk of services being lost when the mandatory requirement comes into effect.</p>
	<p>The council will encourage operators to adopt vehicles with low emissions of both pollutants and carbon, and which use of energy from renewable sources.</p>
Travel concessions	<p>The travel concession scheme for Wiltshire residents will recognise that the rural nature of many bus services may make it necessary for passengers to start essential journeys before the off-peak period.</p>
	<p>The travel concession scheme for Wiltshire residents will recognise the need to make additional provision for people who have difficulty in using buses.</p>
Community transport	<p>More active steps will be taken to promote the development and increase the capacity of community and voluntary transport, and to take advantage of the new flexibilities allowed by the Transport Act 2008.</p>
	<p>Discussions will be held with community and voluntary transport operators to determine the role of community transport in the hierarchy of services, particularly in respect of providing 'local access' services and in providing a safety net to meet important needs that can not be effectively provided for by other means.</p>
Rail	<p>Community rail partnerships will be supported to play a part in maintaining facilities to a good standard, publicising rail travel options locally and nationally and supporting improvement of services.</p>
	<p>The council will actively seek, working with and supporting neighbouring authorities and other organisations where appropriate, to influence railway organisations and the DfT to provide improved rail services and facilities for the county. This will include support for an improved service on the Trans Wilts Line via Melksham; improved services and capacity on western Wiltshire services into Bath and Bristol; reopening Corsham station; investment in the Exeter - Salisbury - Waterloo service; and redoubling of the Swindon - Kemble line.</p>
	<p>The council will work with bus and rail operators to secure closer integration of bus and rail services, and examine the scope for the development of bus / rail interchange facilities where these are limited (e.g. in Salisbury).</p>
	<p>More information will be made available about through journey opportunities by bus and rail, since these are not widely promoted by either the bus or rail operators.</p>

	<p>The council will support the introduction of through bus / rail ticketing schemes in co-operation with transport operators.</p>
Information and marketing	<p>The council recognises the importance of easily available and understandable public transport information in a variety of formats, and will seek to ensure that this is available.</p>
	<p>The bus information strategy will be reviewed to take account of changing user requirements (for example, the growth in electronic communications), and to improve the effectiveness of present methods of information provision. This will involve discussions with operators to clarify roles and responsibilities and to improve the consistency of information provision across the county.</p>
	<p>Operators will be encouraged to take a more positive approach to marketing their services, including taking advantage of new technology (e.g. smartcards) to develop new pricing and ticketing strategies, so as to increase their use and improve their financial sustainability.</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Any funding that is available for public transport infrastructure will be targeted primarily at schemes which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● improve the viability and financial sustainability of service operation, particularly on strategic routes, in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge, and to new developments, and / or ● improve the accessibility of services for those who currently find them difficult to use, including access to the vehicle and access to and between modes ● benefit the largest numbers of actual and potential users.
	<p>Large scale investment by the council in smartcards or real time information is unlikely to be affordable in the early part of the LTP3 period, but developments in both fields will be kept under review with a view to wider adoption at an appropriate time.</p>
General	<p>The council will work in partnership with bus, rail and community transport operators, the area boards and community area partnerships, the Wiltshire Transport Alliance, the NHS, neighbouring authorities and other potential partners to provide a coherent approach to public transport provision across Wiltshire as a whole, and to make best use of available resources to meet the transport and access needs of the county. This may include investigation of options to provide a brokerage for passenger transport services on behalf of other agencies.</p>
	<p>Alternative sources of income will be sought to offset the cost of supporting adequate levels of public transport service. For example, using income from car parking to support local bus services that bring people into the town, and seeking developer funding to make sure that suitable levels of public transport can be provided to new developments.</p>
	<p>New developments will be required to consider the need for sustainable public transport access and should be located, as far as possible, where they will improve the viability of existing public transport services rather than require new services to be provided.</p>



4 Delivery Plan

Introduction

- 4.1 This delivery plan sets out actions that will be taken to progress the long term strategy. Due to the uncertainty surrounding future funding, this will initially cover one year only. It is intended that the LTP3 implementation plans will subsequently be reviewed every three years, to align with the council's medium term financial strategy and reviews of the LAW.

Bus

Network re-design

- 4.2 It is proposed to consult with the bus operators, local communities and other stakeholders to review and re-design the Wiltshire bus network, in order to achieve the most effective use of resources and to optimise the contribution that public transport can make to achieving the council's objectives. The review will start from a 'clean sheet' and follow the principles set out below:

Principles for redesign of the bus network

- Use a 'hierarchy of services' (see Table 4.1) to categorise services according to the strategic and local functions they perform.
- Make use of a range of different methods of service provision as appropriate to local circumstances and the type of need being met (e.g. Strategic network and primary urban services are likely to be provided by conventional bus, while local services may be provided by bus, flexibly routed or demand responsive services, taxi, community transport, voluntary car or car sharing schemes).
- Optimise the contribution that public transport makes to achieving the council's overall transport objectives:
 - support the economy and market towns by bringing shoppers, workers and service users into local service centres, and by providing links at an appropriate frequency between these and higher order centres
 - provide services on the best-used routes that are sufficiently attractive to offer an alternative to the car for at least some users
 - provide a public transport service for people who do not have a car available, to a range of important services and facilities, by offering at least a once a day weekday service wherever possible, and higher levels of service where justified by levels of use and value for money criteria
 - consider the potential for access to the countryside where this can be achieved alongside other priorities.
- Optimise the opportunities for commercial operation and the cost-effective use of public funding by good network design, including:
 - matching service provision to demand and social need
 - making the network simple and easy to understand and market to the public
 - appropriate use of interchange, recognising that we can't provide buses from everywhere to everywhere, but that in some cases a through service will be more effective and encourage greater use
 - where operationally feasible, expecting operators to provide evenly spaced departures along common sections of route.
- Take account of planned housing, retail and commercial developments and the availability of funding from developers to plan and pump-prime services that will ultimately be able to be operated without additional public funding.
- Take account of the existence of rail services, and the opportunity to improve bus / rail integration, where feasible.

4.3 It is recognised that there will be tensions between some of these principles – for example, between the desire for simple and direct services to attract more users, and the aim of providing better levels of accessibility to places and destinations that could be served by diverting the service away from the direct route – and that the network design process will therefore require compromises to be made.

4.4 The first stage of the network redesign will be to define and map the strategic network and primary town routes, and identify the areas to be served by local services. It is intended to consult on this later in the year.

4.5 The detailed planning of the local services will then take place over a longer timescale in a series of area reviews. These reviews will involve consulting the Area Boards and local communities to help identify local needs and service priorities, and where appropriate seeking to find alternative cost-effective ways of meeting these needs within available funding, for example through community and voluntary transport or car sharing. This will help the Council to determine what services it will commission in order to meet priority needs within available resources.

Table 4.1 Proposed hierarchy of services

Category	Sub-category	Minimum Monday - Saturday daytime service levels (subject to meeting value for money criteria and availability of funding) – NOTE: higher service levels may be provided in accordance with guidelines for funding of supported services
<p>Strategic network services</p> <p>Services linking the towns and larger villages with each other and with higher order centres, or providing them with access to the rail network if they do not have a station.</p>	<p>Primary strategic network</p> <p>Services that are able to sustain at least an hourly daytime frequency either commercially or with a reasonable level of financial support.</p>	<p>Hourly service 0800 – 1800 (ideally 0700 – 1900).</p>
	<p>Secondary strategic network</p> <p>Services that are not able to sustain an hourly frequency without substantial financial support.</p>	<p>Two hourly service 0800 – 1800 (ideally 0700 - 1900).</p>
<p>Local services – towns</p> <p>Services linking peripheral areas with the town centre.</p>	<p>Primary town services</p> <p>Services required to bring significant areas of urban population within 400m of a regular bus service.</p>	<p>Hourly service 0800 – 1800 (ideally 0700 – 1900).</p>
	<p>Secondary town services</p> <p>Other town services required for local access but which do not satisfy the definition of a primary service.</p>	<p>Five return journey opportunities per day.</p>
<p>Local services – rural areas</p> <p>Services in rural areas that meet primarily local needs, i.e. do not form part of the strategic network.</p>	<p>Services linking Local Service Centres (as defined in the council's settlement hierarchy) to the strategic network.</p>	<p>Three return journey opportunities per day, including for journey to work.</p>

Category	Sub-category	Minimum Monday - Saturday daytime service levels (subject to meeting value for money criteria and availability of funding) – NOTE: higher service levels may be provided in accordance with guidelines for funding of supported services
	Services to other settlements in rural areas.	One return journey opportunity per day into a local town / service centre, at times appropriate for shopping and personal business (and where possible for access to local health services).
Special services Services for specific purposes, usually to a single destination.	School buses, works services, hospital services, services catering primarily for leisure or tourism.	Not applicable.
'Safety net' services Services catering for important local needs that can not be provided cost-effectively by the bus network.	Link and other voluntary car schemes; community transport; car sharing.	Not applicable.

Commercial services

4.6 A primary aim of the long term strategy is to encourage commercial bus service operation, especially on the strategic network and in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge. Operators will be challenged to fulfil their role in providing services that meet the needs of Wiltshire residents, and the council will seek to assist commercial operation by:

- Use of public bus (and rail) services to carry pupils and students entitled to free or assisted school and college transport.
- Joint work on information provision (including participation alongside the operators in the regional traveline partnership) and assisting operators with dissemination of marketing and promotional material.
- Provision (subject to the availability of capital funding) of improved passenger facilities at bus stops and interchanges.
- Working with operators and planners to secure sustainable public transport provision to new developments through consideration, in the transport assessment that is required as part of the planning process, of the location and design of the development.
- Developing a new approach to securing developer funding (Community Infrastructure Levy or similar) that will allow such funding to be used more effectively to address strategic priorities, including provision of bus infrastructure and to pump-prime additional bus service provision.

- Creating the conditions for punctual and reliable operation, including consideration where appropriate and affordable of bus priority and traffic management measures, network management and management of streetworks and road closures, bus stop clearways and parking enforcement.
- Encouraging operators to plan ahead for the full introduction of the DDA requirements for low floor access.
- Bidding for funding to pump-prime enhanced commercial services if the opportunity becomes available.
- Recognising the importance of fair reimbursement for carrying English National Concessionary Travel Scheme pass holders free of charge, in accordance with the 'no better, no worse' principle.

Council-funded services

4.7 Funding for bus services to complement commercial provision will continue to be the most important element of the implementation plan – around half of the Wiltshire bus network depends on financial support and is provided under contract to the council. As described in section 2, the cost of bus service support has increased significantly in recent years, and alternative sources of funding – such as the use of income from car parking charges, and new ways of securing developer funding such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (or similar) - will be considered as ways of offsetting the impact of reductions in council spending that will inevitably have an impact on bus service support budgets. However, despite this, it is expected that total funding available will be less than in previous years. The government's review of Bus Service Operators Grant could also have a severe impact on the viability of commercial bus services and the cost of supported services.

4.8 In response to this there will need to be an increased focus on value for money and on prioritisation, to make sure that funding is used in the most effective way and to meet the most important needs. Value for money of supported services will also be ensured in the following ways:

- a review of the procurement strategy for all transport services
- continued integration of public transport contracts with school and college transport requirements to make the best overall use of council funding
- regular review of supported services to make sure that they continue to meet local needs and that value for money criteria are being met
- consideration through the area reviews of alternative ways of meeting local access needs in the most cost-effective way.

Demand responsive transport

4.9 The review of the performance of Wiltshire's demand responsive transport services carried out by Loughborough University in 2006 recommended the use of a 'toolkit approach', with the use of demand responsive or conventional bus services being considered on their merits in each particular situation. It is proposed to continue this approach. However, in view of the constraints on future levels of funding, the same priorities and criteria will apply to demand responsive services as are being developed for other bus services (see below). This means that there will need to be an increased emphasis on cost-effective methods of operation if demand responsive services are to be sustainable.

Priorities and criteria for council – funded services

4.10 The priorities and criteria used by the council to guide spending on non-commercial services have been reviewed to make sure they are aligned to corporate and transport objectives, and to allow services to be prioritised more robustly according to the functions they perform

and their value for money. The new guidelines are attached as **Appendix A**, and are based on categorising and prioritising services according to the 'hierarchy of services' outlined in Table 4.1, and their performance in terms of value for money, measured by the subsidy per passenger trip. The principle behind the prioritisation is that highest priority is given to maintaining the minimum service levels shown in Table 4.1 (subject to the value for money criteria being met). Higher levels of service will be provided subject to availability of funding, and prioritised according to the type of service and value for money. Services that have a high subsidy per passenger trip will be reviewed, and are likely to be reduced or withdrawn unless a more cost effective way of meeting the need can be identified. Appendix A explains how the guidelines will be applied to guide decisions about which services will be funded.

Quality and accessibility standards for council-funded services

- 4.11** The council will require an acceptable standard of vehicle and service quality through the conditions of contract. Higher standards will be expected on strategic network and high frequency local services to encourage their use as an alternative to the car. However, priority will be given to maintaining service frequencies if resources are not available for both.
- 4.12** The Disability Discrimination Act (PSV Accessibility Regulations) have for several years required that all new buses with over 22 seats used on local services are wheelchair accessible. Existing non-accessible vehicles will continue to be able to be used until 1 January 2015 (for single deck buses up to 7.5 tonne Gross Vehicle Weight), 1 January 2016 (single deck buses over 7.5t GVW) or 1 January 2017 (double deck vehicles). Beyond these dates all buses used on local services will have by law to be wheelchair accessible. The proportion of low floor accessible bus services has steadily increased since the regulations were introduced, and by 2009/10 34 per cent of all services in Wiltshire, including the majority of higher frequency services, were accessible.
- 4.13** The council's policy is that, from April 2011, all new tenders for supported services on primary and secondary strategic network routes and for the main local services in Salisbury and the larger towns will require low floor accessible buses to be used from the start of the contract. All other local services will be required to be accessible to wheelchair passengers by the dates required by the Accessibility Regulations.
- 4.14** The increased cost of providing and operating accessible buses is likely to be an issue on less well-used services, where the additional revenue from providing a more attractive accessible service is unlikely to meet the additional costs. This may require a review of the way in which some services are provided.

Park & Ride

- 4.15** The Park & Ride strategy is set out as part of the Salisbury Area Transport Strategy (to be reviewed in 2011/12), as the service is provided to support car parking and traffic management policies in the city, and the Vision for Salisbury. The contract for operating the bus service is procured alongside other bus service contracts in the area in order to achieve best value, and consideration is given to coordinating the operation of the service with other local bus service requirements where this can be demonstrated to be cost effective and if it will not detract from use of the Park & Ride service.

Emissions and renewable energy

- 4.16** There is at present a cost premium attached to using low emission vehicles and vehicles powered from renewable energy sources, and this, coupled with the restrictions on availability of funding, will limit the ability to make significant progress towards achieving the long term

strategy in the early years. However, opportunities will be sought to encourage adoption of vehicles which reduce emissions of pollutants and carbon where this can be done through external funding or within available resources.

Community and voluntary transport

Role of community and voluntary transport

- 4.17** The extent of current community and voluntary transport provision is described in section 2. Minibus services are generally small scale, infrequent, and mainly cater for particular client groups (most often older or mobility impaired people who are unable to use ordinary public transport), often run on a 'group hire' basis. There is also an extensive coverage of Link 'good neighbour' schemes which offer a voluntary car service for important journeys that could not otherwise be made. Both types of service play an important role in the public transport strategy and will continue to be funded through grants.
- 4.18** The role of community and voluntary transport has to date been seen as providing transport for those who are not able to use the relatively extensive local bus network.
- 4.19** Given current pressures on public expenditure, and the likelihood that bus operating costs will begin to rise again once the recession eases, it is expected that there will be reductions in the level of service that can be provided by the conventional bus network. There is an opportunity for community and voluntary transport and car sharing to play a larger role in future, perhaps taking over some local routes and services that can no longer be cost-effectively operated as conventional bus services, or providing a 'safety net' to prevent social isolation where other forms of public transport are not available. Local operation may also bring benefits in allowing local communities to have more direct influence over the service that is provided, matching it more closely to changing local needs. This is seen as an area where there should be real opportunities to harness the government's 'Big Society' agenda to empower communities to find their own solutions to local concerns.

Community transport development strategy

- 4.20** Consultation with stakeholders during the development of LTP3 identified that, although there is widespread support for an expansion of the role of community and voluntary transport, there are concerns about the capacity of local communities, and of existing community and voluntary transport schemes, to take on extra responsibilities. It is proposed during 2010/11 to explore the extent to which this expanded role can be developed, and what support and resources would be required to help local communities and existing community transport providers to take advantage of this opportunity. The Transport Act 2008 has provided more flexibility in the way community transport services can be operated (for example, allowing paid drivers to be used on community bus services available to the general public), and there are various sources of funding that may be able to be harnessed to support the development of community activity and social enterprise. The Area Boards and Community Area Partnerships in Wiltshire also provide a framework for harnessing the energies of local communities. Discussions will therefore be held with existing community transport operators, Area Boards and local communities, and other potential stakeholders and partners to determine the degree of support for such an approach, and to identify what funding and other practical assistance would be needed to make it happen. It is intended that this will lead to the publication of a separate community transport development strategy.

Rail

4.21 Public funding for rail services is delivered directly by central government either through its support of Network Rail or through franchising agreements with train operating companies. However, local authorities can play a role in encouraging use of rail services and providing facilities for interchange between rail and other modes of transport including buses, cycling and walking. Local authorities are also consulted on planned changes to rail services and can take the opportunity to support and promote improvements that support local objectives - for example stimulating economic development, providing sustainable transport options and dealing with the transport impacts of new development.

4.22 During 2011/12, the council will take the following actions concerning rail:

- Respond to consultations on rail matters in a way that supports the goals of the LTP3:
 - Improve quality of life
 - Promote equality of opportunity
 - Support economic growth
 - Reduce carbon emissions
 - Contribute to better safety, security and health.
- Support the work of the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership and the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership (including providing funding) and assist other community rail initiatives as appropriate.
- Continue to develop the business case for an improved rail service connecting Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge with each other and with other important stations.
- Manage council owned property surrounding Melksham Station to permit the future development of interchange facilities and station improvements.
- Continue to assist and encourage station and train operators to provide, maintain, improve and promote interchange facilities such as cycle parking, travel information, access for people with disabilities and interavailable ticketing.
- Carry out bus stop and highway improvements where appropriate to support interchange.
- Consider opportunities for rail related improvements as part of the planning and developer funding process.
- When reviewing and re-designing the bus network, treat bus links to rail stations as strategic network services where they provide access to the rail network for towns and larger villages that do not have a railway station.
- Work with neighbouring authorities and other organisations to support proposals that progress the long term strategy objectives
- Work constructively with any train operator wishing to improve services for Wiltshire.

Taxis and private hire vehicles

4.23 The council recognises that taxis and private hire vehicles are an important part of an integrated transport system, playing a variety of roles that complement other forms of transport. They are also extensively used by the council on school and social care contracts.

4.24 The council will seek to provide adequate taxi ranks in locations reasonably close to where people want to travel from, including interchange points with the bus and rail networks.

4.25 As a unitary authority, Wiltshire Council is the licensing authority for taxis and private hire vehicles. It will seek to promote and maintain an adequate supply and coverage of operators and vehicles across the county, including increasing the availability of vehicles accessible

to those with disabilities. From October 2010, every 10th vehicle in an operator's combined taxi / private hire fleet will have to be wheelchair accessible. This is an interim position to begin the process of harmonising arrangements across the previous district council areas, and will be reviewed when the results of the DfT's current accessible vehicle pilots are known, probably in 2011.

- 4.26 Operators will be encouraged to give disability awareness training to their drivers. There is now a legal obligation for drivers of wheelchair accessible vehicles to assist and be aware of the needs of passengers with disabilities.
- 4.27 The council will encourage taxi and private hire operators to take a greater interest in running 'taxilink', 'taxibus' and other types of shared taxi services (particularly in rural areas) as part of its efforts to explore and experiment with alternative ways of meeting transport and access needs.

Fares and travel concessions

- 4.28 The council has no control over fares on commercially-operated bus services, but will encourage operators to offer fares that are affordable, including marketing-led discounts for young people and for regular and group travel. It is, however, recognised that overall income from fares has to be sufficient to maintain the commercial viability of the service.
- 4.29 Fares on council-funded services will be reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance between affordability and financial sustainability. Fares will be benchmarked against those charged on commercial services in the same area.
- 4.30 Free bus travel is available for older and disabled people under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. There is a statutory entitlement to free travel after 9.30am and at weekends, and in Wiltshire this has until now been extended to allow free travel before 9.30am (subject to restrictions on some busy services). However, as a result of reductions in local authority funding, it is proposed to consult on withdrawing this discretionary extension as a way of helping to avoid further reductions in bus services.
- 4.31 The council recognises that not everyone is able to use buses, and therefore provides targeted funding to support alternatives that meet the essential travel needs of those who are not able to benefit from a bus pass. Additional funding is being given to Link schemes to help them cover the costs of providing voluntary car transport, allowing them to reduce the amount of the donation they need to request from their users. Vouchers for travel in an accessible taxi are provided to people who have to travel in a wheelchair and who are therefore not able to benefit from the service provided by the Link schemes.
- 4.32 The council has a subsidised transport scheme for students attending post-16 education (sixth form or FE College). In return for an annual payment, transport to and from school or college is arranged for students who meet the eligibility criteria, using public bus or rail services or special contract vehicles as appropriate. The scheme will be reviewed from time to time to make sure that it continues to reflect educational needs, and is affordable. However, the importance of providing transport assistance in a rural county is recognised, and there are no plans to withdraw the scheme.
- 4.33 The council recognises the benefits of encouraging young people to use public transport, and will work with operators to promote existing discounts and to encourage voluntary standardisation of the rate of discount available to young people and of the qualifying age limits. There are no plans to introduce a council-funded concessionary travel scheme, as earlier research has indicated that the cost would not be affordable, particularly in a time of reduced expenditure.

- 4.34** Inter-availability of tickets will be encouraged on commercial services (as far as is possible in a competitive deregulated market), and will continue to be a requirement on council-supported services. The council will continue to promote the Wiltshire Day Rover ticket which offers unlimited travel on nearly all operators' services throughout the county.
- 4.35** The council will support the introduction and promotion of through bus / rail ticketing schemes in co-operation with transport operators.
- 4.36** Smartcards would offer benefits in permitting more flexible and attractive ticketing offers, and would facilitate the revenue sharing arrangements that are often required to underpin ticket interavailability. The Government has offered incentives to operators to invest in smartcard systems, and funding to local authorities in some of the major urban areas (including Bristol) to establish area-based schemes. The progress of these schemes will be monitored, although it is unlikely that Wiltshire will be in a position to afford large scale investment in capital projects of this nature in the short / medium term. Operators will be encouraged to take advantage of smartcards to increase bus use by developing new approaches to marketing and pricing their product, and to consider opportunities for improving ticket interavailability.

Information and marketing

- 4.37** The council recognises the importance of effective promotion and marketing, both as a way of increasing the use and promoting the viability of public transport, and as a way of protecting and maximising the benefits from the council's investment in transport. Operators, councils and local communities all have a role to play. The council in particular has a role (and a statutory duty in respect of bus service information) to ensure that adequate and comprehensive information is available to passengers and intending users.
- 4.38** The bus information strategy will be reviewed during 2010/11 to take into account changes that have taken place since it was adopted in 2003; for example, the growing use and acceptance of electronic communications, and developments in information and communications technology. The review will include consultation to establish user views, an assessment of the effectiveness of current activities, and discussions with operators. The revised strategy will set out the council's priorities for information provision, and how it will work with the operators and local communities to deliver these in a cost-effective manner and within available funding.
- 4.39** Until the new bus information strategy is agreed, existing activities will continue. These include producing area-based timetable booklets and other information leaflets to complement the printed information provided by the commercial bus operators; provision of roadside timetable information, again to complement that provided by the operators; and active involvement in the regional partnership of operators and local authorities that provides the 'traveline' telephone enquiry line and travel information website. The traveline website has recently been upgraded to make it easier and more attractive to use.
- 4.40** Traveline plays a central role in the bus information strategy, and the council makes a financial contribution to its running costs and is responsible for providing and updating data relating to Wiltshire services.
- 4.41** The real time passenger information system is currently being upgraded by moving to a different operating system (GPRS rather than radio). This will improve the performance of the system, particularly on sections of route that have suffered from poor radio reception, and will avoid the need to spend money on complying with an OfCOM requirement to change the frequency of the radio system. Once the upgrade is complete, it will also be possible to

receive real time information showing the next departure from any stop (on the routes served by the real time system) by texting on a mobile phone, using a unique bus stop identifier that will be advertised at the stop.

- 4.42** A pilot scheme is being considered to develop a 'bus community partnership', which would seek to involve local communities in promoting and encouraging use of local bus services in their area, in a similar way to that adopted with success by the Community Rail Partnerships. Discussions are under way with interested groups, and if successful the idea could be built into the future Bus Information Strategy.

Transport for people with disabilities

- 4.43** The long term strategy and delivery plan include many actions that will improve the availability of transport for people with disabilities, including mobility impaired people, wheelchair users, and those with learning difficulties and visual or hearing impairments. Some of the actions will help to remove barriers to the use of ordinary public transport, and others seek to provide special services where needed. Many of the actions will also benefit other sections of the community; for example, improved access to buses for wheelchair users also help people with pushchairs or buggies, or who are carrying heavy shopping. The actions that will be pursued include:

Removing barriers

- Bus – encouraging use of low-floor accessible vehicles in advance of the dates by which all services will have to be accessible; provision of raised kerbs at bus stops and bus stop clearways to allow buses to pull up at the kerb; improving pedestrian access to bus stops; free bus travel for disabled people and (where necessary) a companion; encouragement to operators to train drivers in disability awareness and customer care.
- Rail – encouraging station operators to improve access to and within the station for disabled and mobility impaired people.
- Taxis – encouraging wider availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, and training of drivers in disability awareness and customer care.
- Support for Independent Travel Training to give people with disabilities the ability and confidence to use public transport.
- Provision of public transport information in accessible formats (for example large print and audio copies of printed material; improvements to the traveline website, and availability of the telephone enquiry service; audio keys to allow visually impaired people to access the information provided by the real time passenger information system).

Special provision

- Funding for community and voluntary transport groups to provide special services for those who are unable to use ordinary public transport.
- Taxi vouchers (as an alternative to the national Bus Pass) for people who have to travel in a wheelchair.

Summary of main actions in the year one delivery plan

Table 4.2 Summary of delivery plan actions

Bus	Continue to fund bus services that meet priority needs not catered for by the commercial network in accordance with the guidelines for funding of supported services.
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	Consult with the operators, local communities and other stakeholders to review and redesign the bus network, in accordance with the 'hierarchy of services' and making use of a range of methods of service provision as appropriate.
	Develop strategic partnerships with commercial operators and promote the viability of commercial services.
	Require low floor accessible buses in all new tenders for supported services on primary and secondary strategic network routes, and for the main local services in Salisbury and the larger towns.
	Review the procurement strategy for all transport services.
Community transport	Continue grant funding for community transport operators and Link schemes.
	Produce a community transport development strategy to expand the role played by community and voluntary transport in meeting local transport needs.
Rail	Respond to rail consultations to support local objectives.
	Work with other partners to support proposals that progress the long term strategy objectives.
	Support community rail initiatives.
	Work with any operator to develop the case for better services in Wiltshire.
	Encourage and assist with improvements in and around stations.
	Treat bus links to railway stations as part of the strategic network of bus services.
	Review fares on council-funded bus services to ensure an appropriate balance between affordability and financial sustainability.
Fares and concessions	Continue to provide additional support to Link schemes in recognition of their role in providing transport for those who can not benefit from the bus pass, and taxi vouchers for people who travel in a wheelchair.
	Continue to provide a post 16 education transport scheme to help encourage participation by young people in further education.
	Encourage voluntary standardisation of the rate of discount on bus fares available to young people, and of the qualifying age limits.
	Encourage operators to adopt smartcards, to increase the use made of public transport by offering more flexible and attractive pricing and ticketing.
Information and marketing	Review the bus information strategy, setting out the roles of operators, the council and local communities in ensuring effective provision of information and promotion of services.
	Work with the regional partnership to provide and improve the traveline telephone enquiry service and website.
	Improve the performance of the real time passenger information system and advertise the availability of the 'next bus at my stop' texting service.

Taxi and private hire	Continue with the harmonisation of licensing arrangements across the Unitary Authority.
	Encourage operators to take greater interest in running taxi-based public transport in rural areas.
General	Develop a new approach to securing developer funding for both services and infrastructure.
	Seek opportunities to increase the use of low emission vehicles and renewable energy sources where this can be done within available resources or through external funding.



5 Appendix A

Guidelines for funding of supported services

Priorities for funding

Table 5.1 Priorities for funding

The council will consider funding services in the following circumstances, taking into account relative priority, and subject to value for money and availability of funding.	
<i>(for definitions of primary and secondary strategic network and town services, see the network hierarchy (Table 4.1))</i>	
Priority	Service types
High	Maintaining up to an hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on primary strategic network bus routes; and up to a two hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on secondary strategic network bus routes.
	Maintaining up to a once per day (Mon - Sat) daytime return journey opportunity to settlements in rural areas; and up to three journey opportunities per day (Mon - Sat, including for journey to work) to settlements designated as Local Service Centres in the council's settlement hierarchy.
	Maintaining up to an hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on primary town services; and up to five return journey opportunities per day (Mon - Sat) on secondary town services.
Medium	Providing up to an hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on secondary strategic network bus routes.
	Providing more than a once per day (Mon - Sat) daytime return journey opportunity to settlements in rural areas; and more than three journey opportunities per day (Mon - Sat) to settlements designated as Local Service Centres in the council's settlement hierarchy.
	Providing more than five return journey opportunities per day (Mon - Sat) on secondary town services.
	Providing 'shoppers special' services in rural areas to a destination other than the local town.
Low	Providing more than an hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on strategic network services.
	Providing more than an hourly daytime service (Mon - Sat) on primary town services.
	Providing evening services (after 1900) on Mondays - Saturdays on strategic network and town services that have an hourly or better daytime service frequency.
	Providing Sunday and Bank Holiday daytime services on strategic network and town services that have an hourly or better weekday daytime service frequency.
	Providing Sunday and Bank Holiday evening services (after 1900) on strategic network and town services that have an hourly or better weekday daytime service frequency.

The council will consider funding services in the following circumstances, taking into account relative priority, and subject to value for money and availability of funding.

The council will consider funding services on their individual merits in the following circumstances, where they support specific approved local objectives, and taking into account the availability of funding including from external sources or other budgets.

	Services for non-entitled schoolchildren travelling to their local designated school.
	Services catering primarily for leisure, tourism or recreation purposes.
	Services to employment or retail sites outside traditional centres.
	Services to hospitals, health centres, surgeries and other local health services.
	Park & Ride services.
	Enhanced services provided to support Area Transport Strategies or other theme strategies developed under the LTP.
	Rail services where they make an important contribution to achieving LTP objectives, and where they can not be funded from other sources.
	Evening and Sunday services on strategic network and local services (urban or rural) that have less than an hourly weekday daytime service.

The council will not normally consider funding services in the following circumstances, unless they are fully funded from other sources.

	School transport for non-entitled children travelling to an establishment other than their designated area school.
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Maximum subsidy / passenger guidelines

1. Guideline for standard services

The council has a maximum subsidy / passenger guideline for most types of service of £3.50 per passenger trip.

The council will not automatically fund services that fall within these guidelines; but will consider whether to fund them taking into account their priority ranking, level of use and relative value for money.

The council will not normally fund services that exceed these guideline thresholds, unless there are particular reasons for making an exception.

2. Special guidelines applying to particular types of service:

Table 5.2 Special subsidy guidelines

Type of service	Maximum subsidy / passenger guideline (notes 1 and 2)	Reason for different guideline
Local services in rural areas – maintaining up to a daily weekday daytime service	£5.00	A higher level of support is considered justified to provide a basic level of accessibility for rural residents
School buses for non-entitled children attending their local designated school	£1.25	A lower level of support per passenger trip is used, reflecting the shorter trip distances and lower fares paid on these types of service
Local town services	£2.50	

Application of the guidelines

- All services will be allocated to one of the ‘type of service’ categories listed above. Each ‘type of service’ category belongs to a defined priority level.
- Subsidy per passenger trip will be calculated for all services (or estimated for a new service / contract until actual data is available)
- Services will be ranked according to subsidy per passenger trip within each priority level.
- Services above the maximum subsidy per passenger guidelines will be reviewed and either revised or withdrawn unless there are reasons for continuing support, or alternative lower cost provision can be identified (within the available budget).
- Services that have the highest subsidy per passenger within each priority group will be subject to review if funding is under pressure. Services in lower priority categories will be more likely to be reduced or withdrawn than those in higher priority categories. Final decisions about which services to reduce or withdraw will be taken by members following consultation, as a political decision balancing the priority of the needs in each category and the impacts of withdrawal against availability of funding.



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