

Melksham Bus Partnership

Suggestion for service changes from January 2018

Background

We understand that Melksham's county supported bus services are to be re-tendered over the next few months, with a view to new contracts being let for services running from January 2018. We have been told of a hope that more services can be operated commercially, thus reducing the need for subsidy, and we applaud that objective, provided that it does not get distorted into a saving of subsidy through significant reduction in used (but support-needing) provision.

The Bus Services Bill has now become the Bus Services Act, and this gives the opportunity for the Local Transport Authority and bus service operators to work together in an Enhanced Partnership Scheme under which co-operative arrangement can be set up without fear of Competition and Cartel law.

Objectives

- Continue to serve existing customers
- Provide an integrated network of services
- Co-operative marketing between transport providers
- Take advantage of new opportunities
- Develop new business to increase ridership to(wards) commercial levels

Methodology

Enhanced Partnership Scheme

Overseen by Wiltshire Council
perhaps contracted to TransWilts CIC
day to day support via Melksham TIC?

Services included:

First Bus, Faresaver, Frome Minibuses, Salisbury Reds, AD Rains

Not included:

service no. 2 (Lackham to Salisbury), 232, 555, or National Express.

Area boundaries

Atworth (The Clock)
Gastard (Harp and Crown)
Lacock (Whitehall Garden Centre)
Bromham (The Greyhound)
Sells Green
Semington (Turnpike Close)
Holt (Ham Green)

i.e. Wider than "urban area" but not as far as next town.

Fares

Regular current ticketing accepted / fares set by operators as at present.

Additional (alternative) fares available across all buses:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| £2.50 per day | £2.00 concession |
| £10.00 per week | £8.00 concession |
| £30.00 per month | £20.00 concession |
| £250.00 per annum | £125.00 concession |

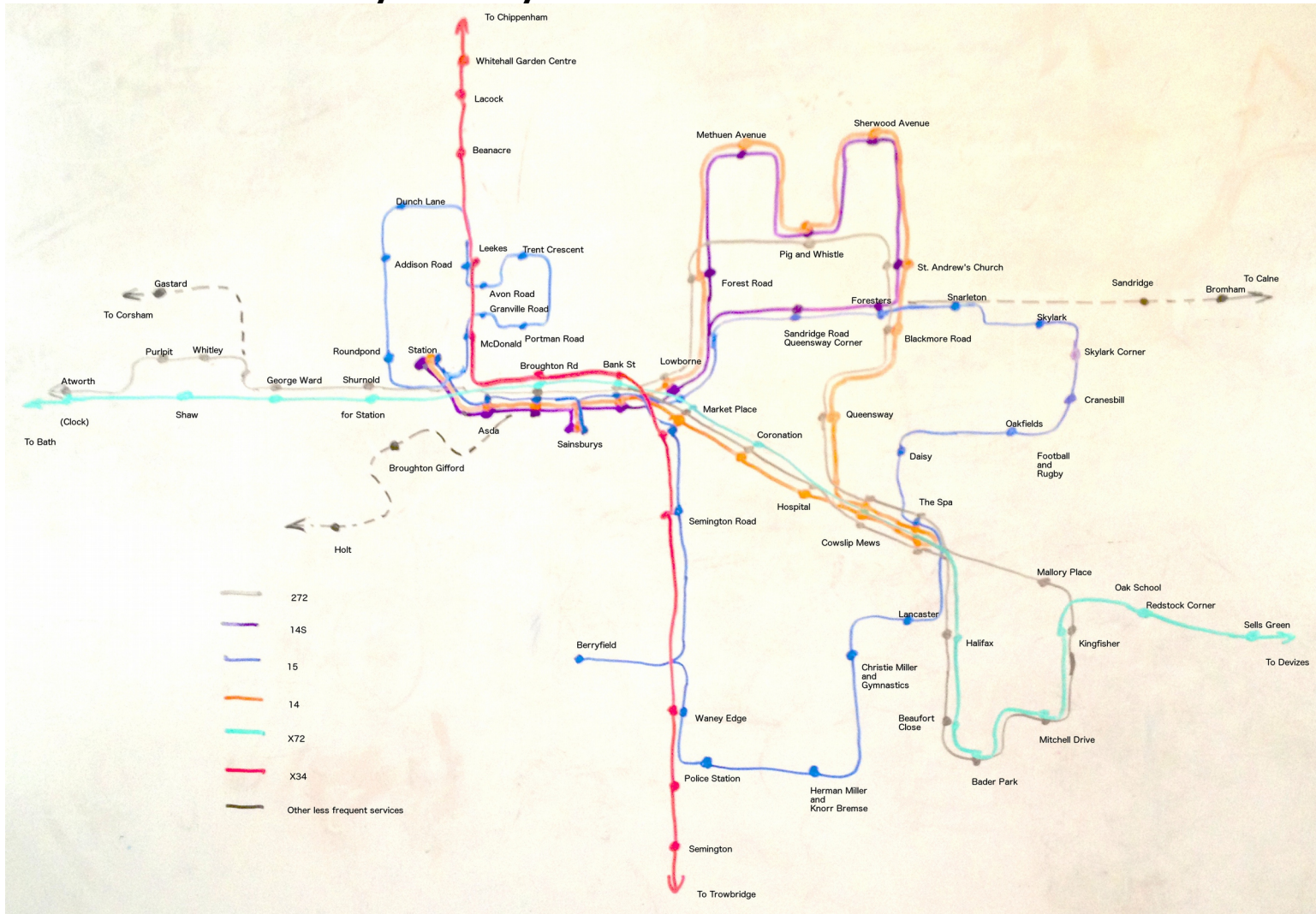
Early trade-ins refunded as if shorter period tickets bought, with £10 admin fee
 Junior tickets up to age 21 at concession price, age at time of purchase

I'm wondering if week and longer tickets CAN be transferable (but not handed back to the person behind as they join the bus!)

Avoids need for ID.

Encourages family members to try out the bus at weekends!

Services - Monday to Friday



Major stops only show on diagram above. Solid lines are minimum hourly

Monday to Friday – description

* 3 buses an hour from the Station and ASDA area via the town centre to Melksham Forest, at 20 minute intervals. 2 services run via Methuen Road and Sherwood Avenue, the third service running direct. 2 of these carry on via Queensway and The Spa corner (for Snowberry Lane Surgery) with no road crossing needed there.

* 2 buses an hour from the Station Area via the Town Centre to Bowerhill residences, one carrying on to Devizes

* 1 bus an hour from the Station area via the Town Centre to Berryfield, Bowerhill Commercial Area, Snowberry Lane, Oakfields Gate and East Melksham then returning via the Town Centre to the Station (15A for anticlockwise). Runs in the opposite direction in the afternoon, to provide shorter journeys for greater passenger flows (15C for clockwise)

* 1 bus an hour from the Town Centre via ASDA to North Melksham via the Station. This service is a continuation of the service that also serves Snowberry Lane Doctor's surgery.

* 2 buses an hour from the Town Centre via ASDA & Station areas to Atworth

* 1 bus an hour (2 at busy times) from Lacock to Semington, via Town Centre

Monday to Friday - Mechanism

	272	x72	x72	14	15A	14s
Station	.06A	.16A		.44	.18	.20
ASDA				.40*	.13*	.17*
Lowbourne	.12			.52		.26
Market Place		.24			.27	
Berryfield					.31	
Knorr Bremse					.35	
Methuen				.56		.34*
Forest Chapel	.15			.58		.32*
Sherwood				.00		.31*
Co-op	.18			.02	.42*	.29
Queensway	.20			.04		
Snowberry	.22B	.26B	.50*B	.06B	.38	
Oakfield Gate					.39	
Skylark					.41	
Kingfisher	.25	.32	.41			
Mitchell	.27	.30*	.43			
Market Place	.33		.53	.10		
Lowbourne					.49	.36
ASDA				.16	.53	.40
Station	.39Q		.58Q	.18	.55	.42
Avon					.59	
Granville					.01	
Dunch Lane					.04	
Addison Road					.07	
Station					.08A	
ASDA					.13	
Station					.15	

* - in reverse order

A - top of approach

B - CowsLip Mews or The Spa stop

Q - Calls in if required by passengers on the bus?

Some specifics (start / stop times, gaps, etc)

15A at 06:40, 09:17 to 12:17 from station. back there for 07:15 (misses out Berryfield), 09:55 to 12:55

15C at 13:47 to 16:47 and 18:05 (final service misses Berryfield) from station. Back there for 14:25 to 17:25 and 18:43

14S at 07:20 and 09:20 to 13:20. back there for 07:42 and 09:42 to 14:42.

14 at 08:44 to 12:44. back there for 09:19 -13:19. Plus some afternoon runs.

1st vehicle starts at 06:40 and runs to end of school.

2nd vehicle starts at school and runs to 18:43

Lunch breaks covered in both rotas

x34, x72, 271 (providing evening services), 272, 68, 69, x76 part of scheme but unchanged times. Scope to revise 68 and 69?

Saturday – Description

Single Vehicle - service 15A / 15C. Add in Forest Estates (to cover current 14 passengers).

x34, x72, 271, 272, 68, 69 part of scheme but unchanged times. Scope to revise 68 and 69? Service x76 does not run on Saturdays.

Sunday – Description

272 runs every 2 hours as at present

Salisbury Red 271 runs in/out Melksham via Snowberry Lane and Sandridge Road, connects with 272 at Bank Street and terminates at Melksham Station.

Footnotes

Takes advantage of following developments since current network set up:

- Opening of Portal Way
- Increased public transport use in Melksham via Railway (now permanent)
- Increase in bus services on routes x34 and x72
- Rerouting of commercial 272 via Melksham Forest, Queensway, Mallory Place
- Travel needs to new Football and Rugby clubs / 7 days a week

Prepares for

- New housing developments at Pathfinder Way and off Snowberry Lane area

This is NOT a PlusBus scheme, but we could look for some token Rail Company buy-in to help with marketing "in association with GWR" and advertising.

This is an early draft document updated 30th May 2017 by Graham Ellis on behalf of Option 24/7 and the TransWilts CIC. Grahamellis@transwilts.org 0845 459 0153. At this stage for technical review and constructive comment.

Combined bus route (geographic)

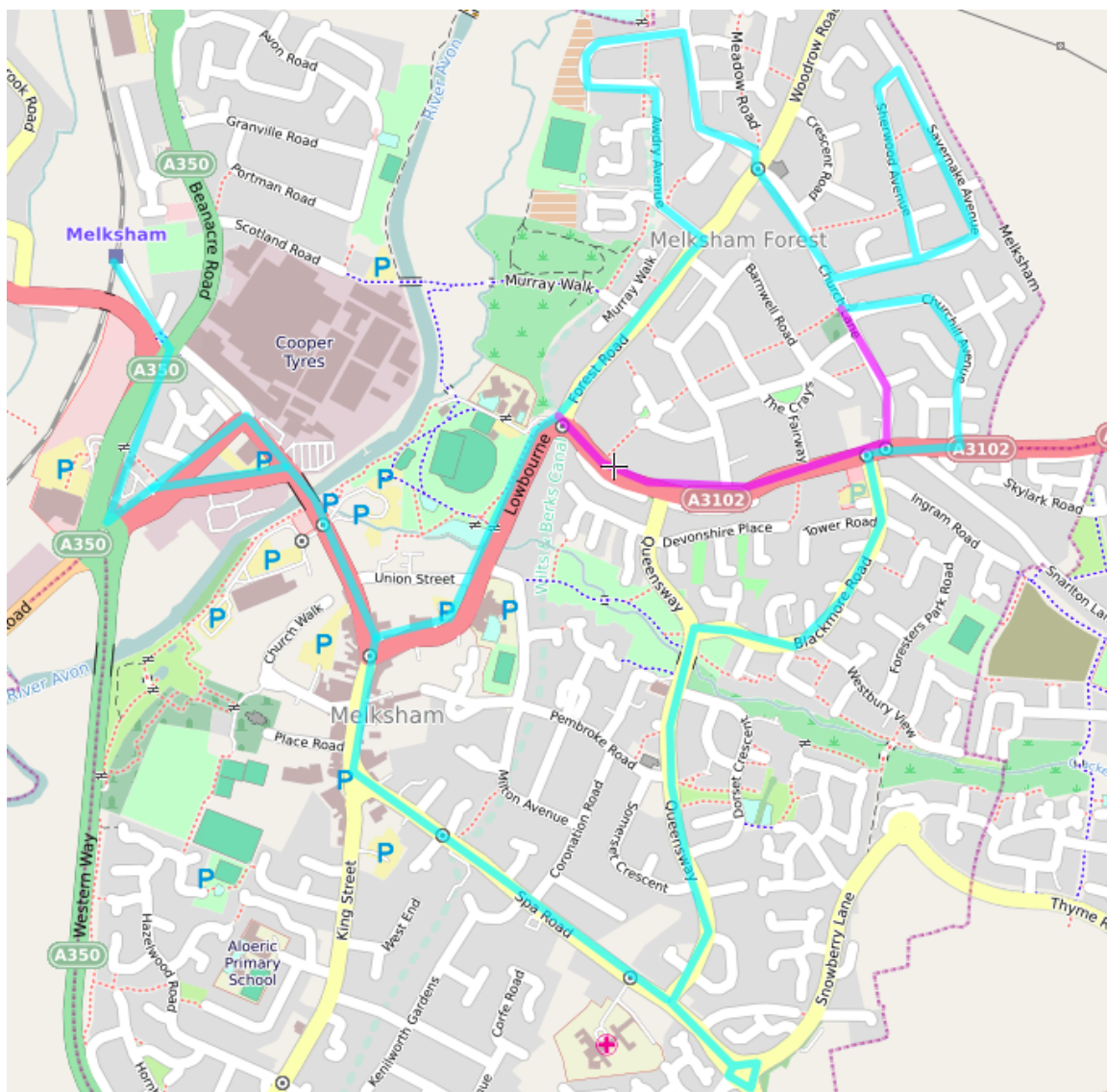
Monday to Friday

Saturday

Sunday

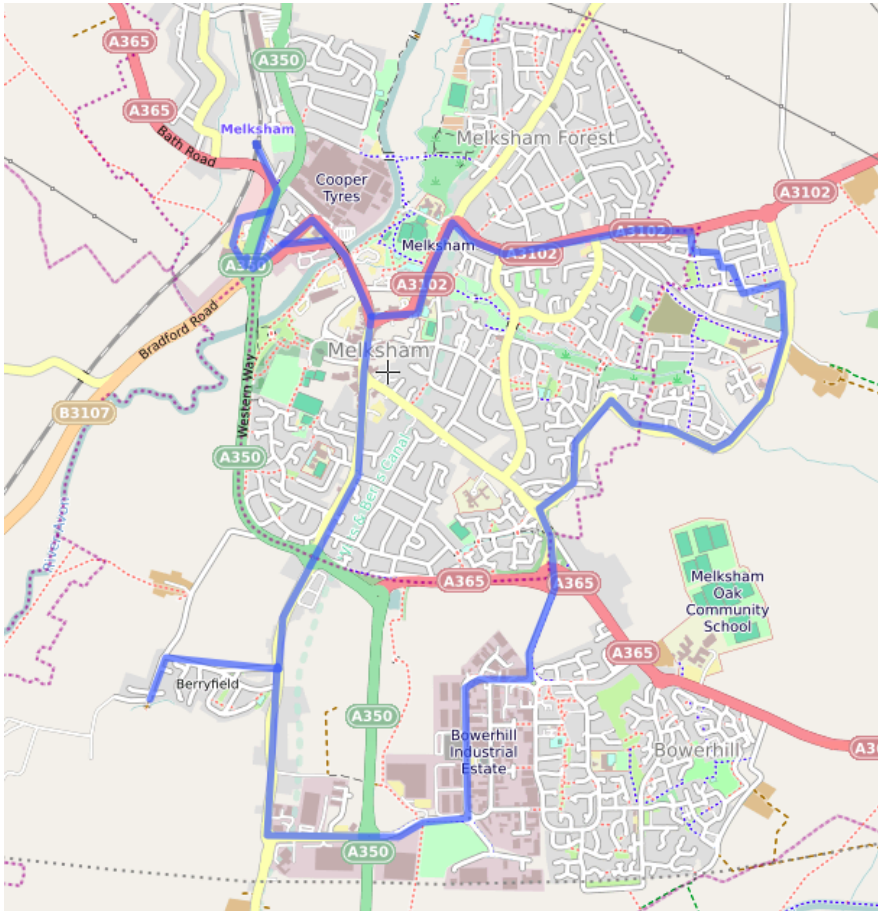


Bus Route 14 (Cyan) with bus route 14s section in Magenta



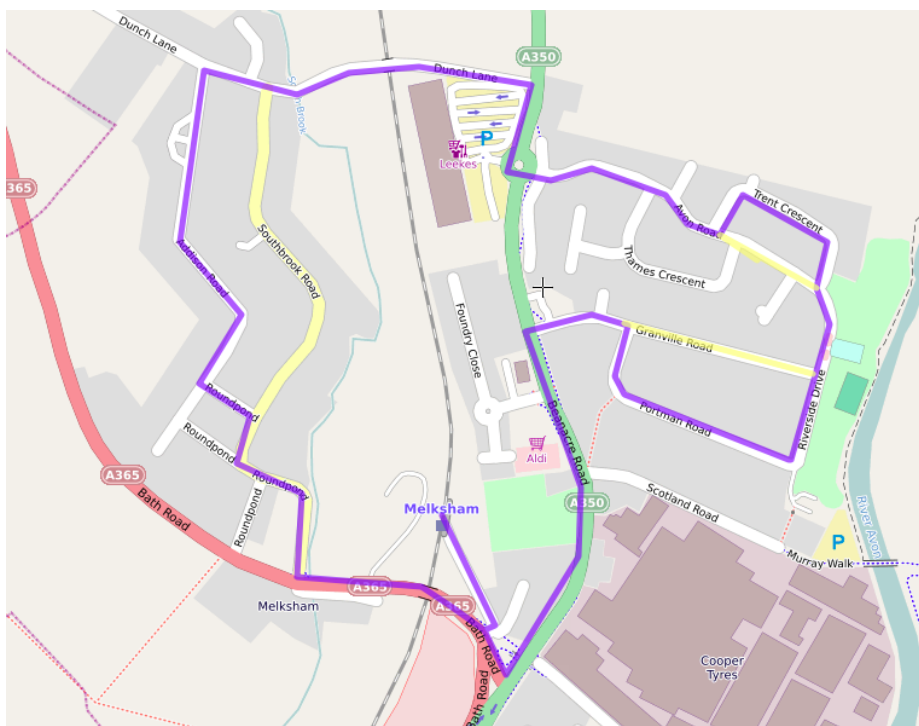
Bus Route 15

Runs as 15a (anticlockwise) in morning. Runs as 15c (clockwise) in afternoon
Most services run on as route 17 to North Melksham



Bus Route 17

Continues as route 15 to serve supermarkets, town, and surgeries



Public

Overview of the background to this proposal

Melksham's supported bus services are to be retendered - potential operators to bid for contracts during the early summer, with services bought to run from January 2018.

Wiltshire Council's public transport department will be asking for bids for the same services as are currently running. They are also prepared to ask for a bid for a community proposal, built on initial work done by TransWilts and the Option 247 team.

Since the current bus services were established, there have been many changes in Melksham which effect - or could effect - people's journeys:

- * Portal Road has opened, giving a potential route through Bowerhill industry
- * Passenger journeys at Melksham Station have risen from 3,000 to 60,000 per annum
- * The Football and Rugby clubs have relocated to Oakfields in Melksham Without
- * First route 272 now serves Melksham Forest and Queensway 7 days a week
- * Saturday bus use has plummeted
- * A new peak just after 09:30, created by changes in the hours of bus pass acceptance
- * The Bus Services Act, allowing greater co-operation between operators, has become law
- * Planning consent granted for new residences - population increase 2000+ near The Spa

Our (Option 24/7 and TransWilts) proposal suggests:

- * Three buses an hour serving Melksham Forest (14, 14S and 272)
- * Two buses an hour serving Queensway (14 and 272)
- * An hourly service (15) from the Station and town centre to Berryfield, Bowerhill industry, Snowberry Lane and East Melksham, then via the town back to the station.
- * Service 15 to run in the reverse direction in the afternoon.
- * An hourly bus to Portman Road, Trent Crescent and via Dunch Lane to Addison Road
- * Day ticket at £2.50 accepted on ALL buses in the area; week, month and annual options
- * Concessionary fares available up to age 21 at date of purchase

The proposals uses the current 2 town vehicles, one starting early for commuters and the other finishing at 18:30 after the evening commute. On Saturday, one vehicle on a modified route 15 to take in Melksham Forest. On Sunday, the new 271 Go-Ahead service to be routed into town via East Melksham and to terminate at the railway station, rather than duplicating the 272 on Bowerhill. Initial indications are that operating costs will be in line with current costs, that existing passenger will have a bus close to current times close to their current stop, and that the services and fares will form an integrated network that will be attractive to new customers.

At TransWilts / Option 24/7 we have informally discussed these proposals with many organisations including the Area Board, Town and Without Council/lors, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rugby and Football clubs, Melksham Community Area Partnership, Great Western Railway and ACoRP (Association of Community Rail Partnerships). Reaction has been very positive indeed as the proposals offer the possibility of turning around the downward spiral of bus use by making the services attractive to many more users. Additional funding opportunities may be available such as a DCRDF (Designated Community Rail Development Fund) grant from the Department for Transport via ACoRP - initial discussions with the national administrator on this are not only positive but very much encouraging us along. Such a grant would require the train linkage (so would not be available if the service were to be recontracted on the current network) and would make a small but useful contribution towards marketing by the same team that has helped turn the train services at Melksham from a token service with few passengers to a vibrant service with 18 trains a day, with the next anticipated change being more not less trains!

Over the next month, TransWilts and the Option 24/7 team will be working to ensure that our suggestion is tailored to work for everyone - passengers, bus operators, and the public purse - and that it can and will be a serious offering for Melksham from 2018 to 2020 - not a bid that's just used to tick the "we consulted and explored option" box in Trowbridge, but a vibrant service fit for the future Melksham.

Notes issues / comments

a) So far an idea / rough arrangement of the jigsaw pieces to see if they could work. We steer a fine line between talking with enough people before we draw up a suggestion to make to decision makers that we're pretty sure will work, and doing so much pre-work that those people feel we are bouncing them into a solution, or providing something that they cannot take possession of.

b) What criteria will be used in asking for and evaluating bids? Financial, risk, ownership, service, robustness, community sentiment, wider sentiment, policy are all areas that should be considered

c) Ticketing via an EPS could be uncoupled from the service provision; it would require a degree of co-operation between bus companies who have traditionally fought one another for passengers, and also the involvement of a co-ordinator which could be Wiltshire Council (if they have the resource) or our community group who – however, some of the bus companies may still see us more as protesters than partners.

d) This is not a proposal to add "PlusBus" to Melksham. Plusbus allows rail tickets to be bought that include a journey within the town as well as a train journey. Plusbus is for town areas but we're planning to go to the villages within the natural Melksham Catchment too. It's noted that Chippenham has a PlusBus scheme which has been one of the least used in the country. Issues with limited acceptance of tickets there have been rectified, but a new scheme in Melksham would be a hard sell just at present.

e) 68, 69, x69 are not really mentioned / changed. There is potential scope for zigzag update / alteration, but previous suggestions were stillborn and a further look (over coming weeks?) would be worthwhile. X69 timing, and a peak run to Trowbridge each day via Holt, need to be factored in to the 14 / 15 / 17 or otherwise solved.

f) There are a few new stops / newly served roads – two stops on Portal Way (Police Station / G Plan / Avon, and Herman Miller / for Knorr Bremse and Gompels), two on Bowerhill (one outside Christie Miller for main industry, and one for the Boomerang area). Also a new stop [option for discussion] on Churchill Avenue – somewhere in the middle / location to be decided.

g) Dunch Lane is currently closed to vehicles at school times. No longer relevant as the school has moved from George Ward to near Bowerhill, but this may need lifting. I understand consultation / proposal are in the pipeline and they must allow buses East to West.

h) The bus gate on Riverside Walk regains a service. A new operating pattern for the 17 will remove service from three short sections of Granville Road, Avon Road and Southbroom Road, but service will be provided (more used, and with a few more services too) at stops within 50 yards [option - alternation]

I) We considered service 15 running from Melksham Town Centre via Kenilworth Gardens but have provisionally ruled this out due to the new 20 m.p.h. Speed limit which would slow the service and be frustrating to through passengers.

j) We are aware of complaints from residents about buses and from bus drivers about parked cars in several places including Skylark Road and the Addison Road area. Such need to be discussed / best compromise found. In both these cases, buses could be diverted away from the area but at what cost to residents who rely on them? Balance needed – and at least our proposals offer the chance to see if we can improve things rather than simply carrying on with the same old problems if the service continues "as is".

k) TransWilts – with potential marketing support (WC cabinet last October stated increased marketing this financial year / yet to be seen, but then we have had elections etc) – can take a partnership role in bringing these plans to fruition.

l) Timing proposals integrate supported services with commercial services (to be part of the EPS scheme) 272, x72 and x34. Should the operators change their times / routes, we may need to retune the network. However, the EPS will allow us to co-ordinate this rather than having to panic over 56 days when a change is registered.

m) Developer contribution for 15 runs out in 2020. Also noting WC hope 14 can "go commercial". Useful buses with good loadings on various new flows will help sustain a long term service.

n) **This list / whole document is a basis for discussion and development.** With nothing cast in stone yet! - update at 06:00 on 30th May 2017