

Amesbury Area Board – 31 Amesbury 2011 Chairman’s Announcement

Proposed changes to bus services

As a result of significant reductions in local authority funding, and the Government’s insistence that a high proportion of the savings are achieved in the first year, Wiltshire Council has had to make difficult decisions in setting its budget for the 2011/12 financial year. However, due to efficiency and procurement savings of £850,000 and the use of additional income from car parking to help fund bus services, it has been possible to limit to £600,000 the amount that has to be found from making changes to bus services. This puts us in a much better situation than many of our neighbouring authorities.

The proposed changes have been identified according to the Council’s published Guidelines for funding of supported services, which were the subject of recent consultation as part of the third Local Transport Plan. The intention behind the proposals is to minimise the impact on users as far as is possible, by spreading the changes across the county and withdrawing services or journeys where alternatives are available, or which are relatively poorly used or expensive to run per passenger carried.

The main changes affecting the Amesbury Community Area are;

- a significant reduction in service to Newton Tony and Cholderton, with most buses on route 63/64 (Tidworth – Porton – Salisbury) terminating at Allington, and only a few running through to Tidworth. The number of passengers using these journeys has reduced in recent years and is now very low.
- Withdrawal of the late evening (2310) bus that currently runs from from Salisbury to Porton on Fridays and Saturdays
- Withdrawal of evening buses from Durrington and Larkhill into Salisbury after 8.30pm (there will still be journeys from Salisbury back to Larkhill and Durrington after this time, provided by diverting another bus route)
- Reduction in the frequency of the Connect 2 Wiltshire shared taxi service that runs in the Woodford Valley, Shrewton and Amesbury area
- Withdrawal of the Connect 2 Wiltshire shared taxi service in the Wylve Valley
- Withdrawal of service X88 which provides a Wednesday and Saturday only shoppers bus from Chitterne to Bath, via Tilshead, Lavington and Bratton

Although we have to make the required saving, we are confident that the proposals represent the best way of achieving this with the minimum of hardship. Nevertheless, we recognise that changing bus services will inevitably have an impact on users, and want to give communities the opportunity to respond if they are aware of particular difficulties that will result.

It may be possible in some cases to fund a limited alternative service, or to help local people develop community transport solutions.

A letter has been sent to all town and parish councils explaining the proposed changes, and asking for feedback. The changes in the Amesbury Area will be implemented on 6 June, to coincide with other revisions to services in the South of the county, and because of this, responses are requested by 15 April so that there is the opportunity if necessary to investigate alternative provision before the changes are implemented. Replies should be sent to ian.white@wiltshire.gov.uk in the Council's Passenger Transport Unit.

Parish and Town Councils are requested to respond to Ian White directly.