

**CONSULTATION ABOUT BUS TOKENS, TAXI VOUCHERS
AND RAILCARD VOUCHERS**

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

About the consultation

The purpose of this consultation was primarily to collect information about the possible consequences of the proposed decision. It was considered that changes to the alternative concessions might have an adverse effect on community and voluntary organisations providing transport (such as Link schemes and community minibuses) either by creating more work for them or by depriving them of income from tokens/taxi vouchers, also clarification of the reasons people take up these alternatives could help us devise measures to ameliorate the disbenefits to customers to some extent.

A consultation form was devised that could be completed by individuals wishing to express a view. This form was made available on the Wiltshire Council web site. Letters were sent to the organisations listed below inviting their comments and enclosing copies of the consultation form that they could pass to any individuals who wished to respond.

All town and parish councils in north and west Wiltshire
Calne Community Transport
Chippenham and District Transport for the disabled
Holt Community Bus
Melksham Council of Community services
Trowbridge Guild of Community service
Warminster Council of Community service
The Cartmell Community Minibus
Three Villages Minibus
Warminster Mencap and Gateway Club
Trowbridge Oaks Residential and Nursing home
Community First
Carers Support West
Develop
Alzheimers Support
Wiltshire People First
Wiltshire Involvement Network
Trowbridge Area Community Link
Corsham Link
Limpley Stoke & Freshford Link
Westbury & District Link
Melksham & District Link
Lydiards Link
Chippenham Transport Link
Malmesbury & District Link

Calne & District Community Link
Cricklade Link
Box, Colerne & Rudloe Link
Four Villages Link
Warminster & District Link
Dauntsey Vale Link
Village Link
Bradford on Avon & District Link
Link 6 Good Neighbour Scheme
Purton Age Concern Minibus
Three Villages Minibus
Warminster Mencap & Gateway Club
Age Concern Wiltshire
Wiltshire & Swindon Users Network
Corporate Director, Community Services, Wiltshire Council

About those who responded

311 responses were received before the closing date:

30 town and parish councils responded
12 voluntary or community transport schemes responded
4 groups promoting the interests of users responded
265 individuals responded

Of the individuals who responded:

157 had a bus pass
29 had tokens
28 had taxi vouchers
28 had railcard vouchers
21 had no concession
95 considered themselves disabled, including 4 who were over 60
158 were over 60 but not disabled

About hardship

Of the individuals receiving tokens or vouchers:

67 said they would suffer hardship if they were withdrawn
20 mentioned mobility difficulties as the reason for hardship
30 mentioned the financial impact as the reason for hardship
25 mentioned the unsuitability of the bus service as a reason for hardship
4 of the community transport groups who responded identified that discontinuation of vouchers or taxi tokens would significantly affect their finances

Views expressed

Many responses referred to understanding that there was a need to standardise the concessions available throughout Wiltshire.

Of the 311 responses, 153 were broadly in agreement with the proposal to discontinue the current alternative concessions but only 63 were without qualifications or reservations.

In particular, 45 responses said that it depended on what other measures were put in place and 30 said that buses would not be suitable for them.

There was a widespread view that discontinuing alternative concessions would adversely affect groups who were already disadvantaged, either because they lived away from bus routes or because they were unable to use buses due to health or bodily condition. The financial loss to users was also widely mentioned.

However, none of the responses put forward any other identifiable groups who could be adversely affected.

Some suggested that some or all of the existing concessions should be extended throughout the County.

A very practical suggestion, made by Community First, was for a mileage subsidy to encourage use of Link Schemes and perhaps reduce the amount that users would need to donate.

It was suggested that, to overcome the problem of causing hardship to existing users, the token and voucher concessions should be discontinued for any new applicants and retained for existing users only.

Some individuals commented that they used their Railcard to make long distance journeys which contributed to their health and welfare, e.g. visiting specialist hospitals or family who have moved away.

Recommendation from Chippenham Area Board:

That Wiltshire residents retain the choice to request travel tokens or vouchers instead of a bus pass. The value of the tokens/vouchers be increased from £18 to £30

About the numbers

Please note that the numbers quoted in this summary are based only on the answers given in the consultation. There were inconsistencies and omissions in the responses received, therefore the breakdowns in different categories do not always add up to the same total. Also note that due to the method used to obtain the responses they should not be regarded as a representative sample or survey.

