

## Wiltshire Council

### Environment Select Committee

21 November 2017

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**Subject:** Public Transport Review Update

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Bridget Wayman – Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste

**Key Decision:** No

#### Executive Summary

Faced with increasing demands for services against its limited resources, the Council reviewed discretionary expenditure in the passenger transport service. The main aim of the service is to provide transport for education, access to rural areas that are not served by the commercial bus network, and access to employment.

Extensive stakeholder and public consultation was undertaken from mid-2015 to April 2016; to help determine the impact of any reduction to Wiltshire Council supported bus services, particularly on individuals. The results of the consultation were reported to Cabinet on 14 June 2016. A total of 11,093 responses were received to the public consultation, making this the second largest response to any Wiltshire Council consultation.

It was highlighted in the consultation questionnaire that the consultation was focused on Wiltshire Council supported bus services and not commercial bus services. It was also highlighted that the consultation was not a detailed consultation on particular routes, timetables or destinations, and as there would be many combinations of possible supported bus service changes, the Council had not yet determined what these changes might be; however, information on bus services 'at risk' was provided. Instead, it was made clear that responses to the consultation would improve the Council's knowledge and understanding and would help guide the Council's subsequent decisions on any supported bus service changes.

The consultation findings showed that supported public transport is not simply about getting from A to B, but that its output underpins the core priorities for individuals, communities and business - as detailed in the Council's Business Plan. For instance, it contributes by providing access to essential services, such as medical facilities, shops and social activities, improving the health and quality of life by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality pollutants, as well as enhancing the economic prosperity of Wiltshire and the wider region.

Cabinet was mindful not to reduce public transport to the levels it consulted upon and took note of the impact a reduction would have. It was therefore resolved to:

- (i) Review all passenger trip subsidies above the thresholds set out in the Local Transport Plan and together with other measures described in this report

achieve £500,000 savings in the passenger transport budget. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste is given delegation to make final decision following consultation of specific services which fall under this criterion.

- (ii) Wiltshire Council works more closely with the Health Authority to the mutual benefit of both organisations, particularly around the integration of Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPTS) with Wiltshire Councils Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and Social Care transport and the development of the Public Transport Strategy.

### **Proposal**

1. It is recommended that the Environment Select Committee:

- (i) Endorses how the £500,000 worth of savings to the Passenger Transport Budget has been achieved, as asked by Cabinet in October 2016
- (ii) Supports further work being undertaken on the integration of NEPTS and SEND and social care transport

### **Reason for Proposal**

To inform the Environment Select Committee of the progress made since the last report on the implementation of Cabinet decision after the review of the service.

**Alistair Cunningham**  
**Corporate Director, Growth, Investment and Place**

## Wiltshire Council

### Environment Select Committee

21<sup>st</sup> November 2017

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**Subject:** Outcome of Passenger Transport Review

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Bridget Wayman – Highways, Transport and Waste

**Key Decision:** No

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#### Purpose of Report

2. To update members of the Environment Select Committee on the outcome of Cabinet's decision of October 2016 regarding the review of passenger transport which was:
  - (i) Review all passenger trip subsidies above the thresholds set out in the Local Transport Plan and together with other measures described in this report achieve £500,000 savings in the passenger transport budget. The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Waste is given delegation to make final decision following consultation of specific services which fall under this criterion.
  - (ii) Wiltshire Council works more closely with the Health Authority to the mutual benefit of both organisations, particularly around the integration of Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPTS) with Wiltshire Council's Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and Social Care transport and the development of the Public Transport Strategy.

#### Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

3. The Wiltshire LTP Public Transport Strategy is relevant to all of the 2017 - 2027 Business Plan's outcomes:

##### *Growing the economy*

- Support the local economy by making it easy for workers, shoppers and visitors to access local centres and facilitate development growth by helping to facilitate the planned housing and employment growth set out in the Wiltshire Core Strategy.
- Improve journey time reliability for road users by removing some car trips from the highway network and therefore reducing congestion and delays.

### *Strong Communities*

- Enable local groups to operate community and voluntary transport schemes; particularly to provide local access and safety net transport services to meet needs that cannot be effectively provided by other means, such as the Link schemes.
- Help support community rail partnerships to improve stations and train services.
- Enhance the built and natural environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality pollutants.

### *Protecting the vulnerable*

- Provide access to key services and facilities for Protected Characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

### *Working with partners*

- Through working with bus suppliers, we have been able to introduce the changes with minimal impact and at an affordable price.

## **Background**

4. Faced with increasing demands for services against its limited resources, the Council reviewed discretionary expenditure in the passenger transport service. The main aim of the service is to provide transport for education, access to rural areas that are not served by the commercial bus network, and access to employment.
5. Extensive stakeholder and public consultation was undertaken from mid-2015 to April 2016 to help determine the impact of any reduction to Wiltshire Council supported bus services, particularly on individuals. The results of the consultation were reported to Cabinet on 14 June 2016. A total of 11,093 responses were received to the public consultation, making this the second largest response to any Wiltshire Council consultation.
6. It was highlighted in the consultation questionnaire that the consultation was focused on Wiltshire Council supported bus services and not commercial bus services. It was also highlighted that the consultation was not a detailed consultation on particular routes, timetables or destinations, and as there would be many combinations of possible supported bus service changes, the Council had not yet determined what these changes might be; however, information on bus services 'at risk' was provided. Instead, it was made clear that responses to the consultation would improve the Council's knowledge and understanding and would help guide the Council's subsequent decisions on any supported bus service changes.

7. The consultation findings showed that supported public transport is not simply about getting from A to B, but that its output underpins the core priorities for individuals, communities and business as detailed in the Council's Business Plan. For instance, it contributes by providing access to essential services, such as medical facilities, shops and social activities, improving the health and quality of life by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality pollutants, as well as enhancing the economic prosperity of Wiltshire and the wider region.
8. Cabinet was mindful not to reduce public transport to the levels it consulted upon and took note of the impact that a reduction would have. It was therefore resolved that officers make £500,000 savings from those less well used services that exceeded the maximum permitted value of £3.50 per passenger trip, as defined in the LTP. These savings were to be achieved for the 2017/18 financial year.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

9. A three tiered approach to achieving the £500,000 savings as defined below was adopted:
  - **Low impacted services** – Those services with the fewest passengers affected and the highest cost per passenger subsidy. These services largely required the cessation of services and were delivered by March 2017.
  - **Low / Medium impacted services** – These were largely services where officers were able to negotiate a revised price, due to a reduction of the service. These were all delivered by June 2017.
  - **Medium / High impacted services** – These were generally the services that required a procurement exercise, as the changes to the services were significant. These were all delivered by September 2017.
10. **Appendix 1** outlines the services that were affected and to what extent in more detail, but below is a general summary:

Of the 39 bus services considered:

- 9 ceased
- 26 continued at a reduced level of service
- 4 were tendered with a reduced level of service

The significant change and the largest cost saving was the Connect2Wiltshire(C2W) Pewsey Vale Service. Due to the high operating costs of this service, which are in part due to the Council having to step in after the collapse of Hatts Coaches and the demand responsive nature of the service any change would be significant.

Officers designed a timetable that could best meet the needs of the travelling public, but at the same time remove a vehicle from the network. Due to this significant change a mini consultation targeted at the "current" bus users of the service was undertaken. 74 responses were received.

Officers were able to accommodate some of the requests from the consultation and add them into the timetable.

A tender was despatched, with various options ranging from the current timetable to a reduced timetable, with a few add-ons, such as maintaining a rail link service to and from Pewsey station.

Options were tendered so that officers could determine the overall cost implications and award only what could be afforded. It was evident that anything other than a reduced level of service would far exceed the £3.50 cost per passenger trip.

It is recognised that the Eastern part of the county has seen the most significant savings. This is largely due to the expensive C2W service and the reduction of service between Hungerford and Marlborough. Both of these services have been reduced in capacity by one bus, which is why the savings are weighted in this area. This is unfortunate for this area, but these services were operating well above the £3.50 per passenger trip subsidy. There is still a very viable service for the people living in this area, all be it at a reduced frequency and officers along with Cllr Prickett, Portfolio Holder for Public Transport, have attended Pewsey Area Board to explain the rationale behind the changes.

11. With regard to the integration of NEPTS and SEND transport, there has been little progress to date, which is very much the picture nationally. With the recruitment of a new Corporate Director for Adult Care & Health Accountable Officer (CCG) it is hoped that this piece of work can be progressed.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

12. There are no specific safeguarding implications arising from the reduction in bus services.

### **Public Health Implications**

13. There are no specific public health implications arising from the reduction in bus services. This is largely due to the fact that so few people were impacted.

### **Corporate Procurement Implications**

14. Of the four services tendered, these were done so in accordance with corporate procurement advice and within guidelines.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

15. An Equality Evidence Analysis Document (EEAD) was completed as part of the October 2016 Cabinet report. It was identified that the following six protected characteristics would be impacted the greatest:

- Age
- Disability
- Low Incomes
- Rurality
- People with no access to private transport
- Military status

16. In reviewing the EEAD, the protected characteristics identified remain the most impacted, but in addition to the six identified the protected characteristic of “Shift / Part-time worker” should also be included. There have been a number of communications received from shift / part time workers who have been affected by the reduction / cessation of some of the evening and weekend services.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

17. As detailed in October’s Cabinet report, there has been ‘No significant environmental effect’.

### **Risk Assessment**

18. This section highlights the key risks and proposed management of those risks associated with the proposals in this report.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

19. These service changes have not gone unnoticed with criticism in the press. There were particular concerns raised by MPs around the reduction of the evening bus service between Marlborough and Swindon and the general reduction of services in the east of the county, particularly in the Vale of Pewsey to the Hampshire border. This was managed through an effective communications strategy.
20. A number of residents have contacted the Council and/or their MPs to state that there is no viable alternative for them in accessing employment and/or other essential services. This was unfortunately inevitable in some cases and outlined as a risk in the October 2016 Cabinet paper, but, where possible, officers have assisted with advice on other viable alternatives.
21. The response from the public would have been significantly worse should there have been a deeper reduction to the public transport network as initially anticipated.

### **Financial Implications**

22. Through the review of bus services where the cost per passenger trip exceeded £3.50, as defined in the LTP, £452,000 savings have been achieved in the 2017/18 financial year and in 2018/19 and future years a saving of £535,000 has been achieved.

### **Legal Implications**

23. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

### **Options Considered**

24. There are no options to consider other than to note this paper.

### **Conclusions**

25. That:

- (iii) Endorses how the £500,000 worth of savings to the Passenger Transport Budget has been achieved, as asked by Cabinet in October 2016
- (iv) Supports further work being undertaken on the integration of NEPTS and SEND and social care transport

**Parvis Khansari**

Associate Director Highways and Transport

Report Author:

**Jason Salter**

Head of Service - Passenger Transport Unit

Tel: 01225 713334

2 November 2017

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:**

None

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Table of affected bus services