

APPENDIX 2

22 May 2013

Passenger Transport Unit
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Our ref: IW/PTB302

Dear Consultee

Proposed changes to the Zig Zag bus service (Trowbridge – Bradford – Melksham – Corsham – Chippenham)

The Council is currently reviewing the Zig Zag bus service which runs between the towns listed above. I am therefore writing to ask for your views on the proposed changes, which it is intended will be introduced in January 2014.

This is one of an ongoing series of reviews which are looking at poorly-used bus services that require a relatively high level of council funding in relation to the number of passengers they carry. The reviews are being carried out in the context of the current pressures on public spending and the requirement of the Council's Financial Plan to make savings in funding for bus services.

However, although there is a need to make financial savings, the reviews are also a part of an ongoing re-assessment of the bus network in the county, which aims to identify the most cost-effective means of meeting local access needs in a way that can be financially sustainable in the longer term. The help of the area boards and community area partnerships is being sought to identify local needs and priorities, and possible ways of meeting these in an affordable way. This could include local initiatives to develop community and voluntary transport, or car sharing.

In this context, Wiltshire Council has been allocated some one-off funding by central government to assist with expanding and setting up community transport schemes. Part of this has been used in association with Community First to set up a 'Development Fund', to which groups are able to bid for help with setting up or expanding alternative transport schemes to meet local needs.

The proposals

The existing Zig Zag service is relatively costly to operate and many journeys are poorly used. The council is, therefore, looking for a more cost-effective way of providing a service that meets the needs of the area at an affordable cost to the council. A possible timetable is suggested that we believe will meet the majority of these needs, while reducing the cost of operation. **An information sheet is attached** which summarises the use made of the current service and sets out the proposed revised timetable.

Your views are sought on these proposals and in particular your answers to the following two questions;

1. **Are you aware of any significant hardship** that would be caused if these proposals were implemented? If so, please could you let us know what specific journeys could no longer be made and, if possible, give an indication of how many people you think would be affected.
2. **Do you have any suggestions for alternative proposals** that would achieve a similar level of financial saving with less impact? (We are aware that there may be other ways of meeting some of the needs of the area in other ways, for example by community or voluntary transport.)

The consultation will close on **2 August 2013**. Responses can be sent by post to the Passenger Transport Unit, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN (attention of Ian White); or by email to buses@wiltshire.gov.uk.

This consultation letter has been sent to town and parish councils and their transport representatives; councillors and Area Boards; user and community groups and transport operators, including community transport. Questionnaires will also be made available on the bus so that users are able to comment on the proposals. Copies of the user questionnaire will also be available shortly on the council's website, or can be requested from the address above.

Yours sincerely



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Wiltshire Council Bus Service Reviews 2013/14

Consultation on initial options

Information sheet

Trowbridge – Bradford – Melksham – Corsham – Chippenham (Zig Zag service)

Summary of proposed service change

To reduce the cost of providing the Zig Zag service, by reducing the frequency of operation whilst seeking to continue providing opportunities for travel that will meet the needs of as many of the current users as possible.

Current service information

Service provided	<p>Between Trowbridge, Holt, Broughton Gifford, and Melksham – this section of the route has the most frequent service, with eight journeys a day in each direction between 0800 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays, and six journeys in each direction on Saturdays. Journeys between 0900 and 1400 also call at Bradford on Avon.</p> <p>Between Melksham, Shaw, Atworth, Purlpit, Whitley, Gastard and Corsham – five or six journeys in each direction between 0900 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays, and four journeys in each direction on Saturdays, continue beyond Melksham to Whitley and Corsham.</p> <p>Between Corsham and Chippenham – two journeys in each direction on Monday to Friday mornings continue to / from Chippenham, running via Corsham Road Estate (near Lacock) and Chippenham Hospital. On Saturdays two journeys continue as far as Corsham Road Estate.</p>
Funding	The whole service is funded by Wiltshire Council, at a cost of £108,000 per annum.
Usage	Around 28,500 passenger journeys a year are made on the service, equivalent to approximately 95 single journeys per day.

Service assessment

Purpose of the service

The Zig Zag service was formed 2 years ago by combining three under performing bus routes which linked Melksham with Trowbridge (via Holt), Bradford on Avon and Corsham, into one longer service. By merging these services, the new route was able to offer several new journey opportunities and is designed to meet as far as possible the needs of several different groups of users;

[continued overleaf]

- The Zig Zag service is the main public transport service for the villages of Holt and Broughton Gifford, offering access to shops, personal business, medical and leisure / social opportunities in Trowbridge, Melksham, Bradford on Avon and Corsham, and for work, school and college in Trowbridge.
- It is also the only bus service to serve the village of Gastard, providing access to shops, personal business, medical and leisure / social opportunities in Corsham, Melksham, Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge.
- The service also provides the only way of travelling by public transport between the following towns without having to change buses:
 - Corsham to Melksham / Bradford on Avon / Trowbridge (off-peak journeys only);
 - Melksham to Bradford on Avon
 - Bradford on Avon to Chippenham (two journeys a day);
- By running through from Trowbridge to Corsham / Chippenham, the service also provides opportunities for the residents of Whitley, Atworth and Shaw to travel to Bradford on Avon and Trowbridge, supplementing the services to Bath, Melksham and Devizes provided by other bus companies.
- The two journeys that extend from Corsham to Chippenham provide an opportunity for two hours shopping in Chippenham for people living in Bradford on Avon, Holt, Broughton Gifford, Shaw, Atworth, Whitley and Gastard, and for shopping in Corsham and Chippenham for residents of the Corsham Road estate (Lacock).

Use made of the service

The Zig Zag service as a whole carries around 95 single passenger journeys per day, which is equivalent to an average of only 8 or 9 passengers boarding during the whole length of each individual bus journey.

The largest group of users are residents of Holt and Broughton Gifford travelling to/from Trowbridge and Melksham town centres. There is also a small amount of use of the service to travel from Holt to Bradford on Avon, although this has reduced in recent years. In all, these villages account for nearly a half of all passenger journeys.

Use of the service north of Melksham has also reduced in recent years, largely due to changes to the Bath-Melksham service which now also calls at Whitley. Surveys have indicated that few people now use the service to travel from Shaw, Whitley, Atworth and Gastard to/from Corsham (on average less than one passenger per journey), although there is also some use of the service to travel from Melksham to/from Corsham, and from Corsham, Whitley and Atworth through to Trowbridge and return. There are also still a few passengers using Zig Zag to travel between Atworth, Whitley and Melksham despite the availability of other services.

Use of the service to travel to/from Chippenham is also disappointingly low and is variable, with users appearing to travel irregularly or at best once a week.

In all, nearly two thirds of passenger journeys are made entirely within the Trowbridge – Bradford – Melksham section of the route, and around a quarter entirely within the Melksham – Corsham – Chippenham section of the route. The remainder (around a sixth) travel between the south and north sections of the route.

Financial assessment

The cost of providing the Zig Zag service is high because it requires the equivalent of two buses and drivers per day to operate it. With reducing numbers of passengers using the service, the cost to the Council of funding it exceeds the Council's maximum subsidy guideline of £3.50 per passenger trip set out in the 'Guidelines for funding of supported services'.

Conclusions and options for future service provision

The aim of this consultation is to identify possible ways of providing a cost-effective service that meets the needs of the existing users at an affordable cost to the council. A proposed timetable is attached that we believe will meet the majority of these needs, albeit with a reduced frequency of service, whilst reducing the cost of operation by reducing the number of vehicles required.

Whilst reasonable use is made of the Zig Zag service over the Trowbridge-Melksham section of route, use of the section north of Melksham is poorer and no longer justifies the number of journeys provided on it. The proposed timetable therefore maintains a similar number of journeys between Trowbridge and Melksham, but reduces the number of journeys between Melksham and Corsham. The service north of Corsham is entirely withdrawn, as most users would be still be able to travel to alternative destinations to meet their needs. We are aware that there is a need for a replacement service from the Corsham Road estate and will be consulting local residents separately about this.

However, there may be other ways of providing a cost-effective service that still meets local needs, and if you have any suggestions about how this might be done, we would be pleased to receive them.

Proposed Zig Zag bus timetable from January 2014

<u>Mondays to Fridays</u>									<u>Saturdays</u>						
		TB		X				TB		TB				TB	
Corsham, Newlands Rd	0720	--	1000	1130	--	--	--	--	--	--	1000	1205	--	1615	--
Gastard, Harp & Crown	0724	--	1004	1134	--	--	--	--	--	--	1004	1209	--	1619	--
Whitley, Corsham Road	0727	--	1007	1137	--	--	--	--	--	--	1007	1212	--	1622	--
Atworth, Purlpit	0732	--	1012	1142	--	--	--	--	--	--	1012	1217	--	--	--
Atworth, Clock	0734	--	1014	1144	--	--	--	--	--	--	1014	1219	--	--	--
Shaw, Church	0739	--	1019	1149	--	--	--	--	--	--	1019	1224	--	1625	--
Dunch Lane	--	--	1020	R	--	--	--	--	--	--	1020	R	--	--	--
Melksham, Asda	R	--	1023	R	--	--	--	--	--	--	1023	R	--	--	--
Melksham, Market Place	0747	0900	1028	1157	1205	1340	1635	1805	--	--	1028	1233	1433	1633	1805
Broughton Gifford, Fox	0758	0908	1036	--	1213	1348	1643	--	0908	1036	1241	1441	1641	--	--
Holt, Station Road	--	0913	R	--	R	R	--	--	0913	R	R	R	--	--	--
Holt, Three Lions	0803	0916	1041	--	1218	1353	1648	1813	0916	1041	1246	1446	1646	1813	--
Bradford on Avon, Bridge	B	B	1046	--	1223	B	B	1818	B	1046	1251	1451	1651	1818	--
TROWBRIDGE, Town Centre	0820	0933	1058	--	1235	1408	1703	--	0933	1058	1303	1503	1703	--	--

<u>Mondays to Fridays</u>									<u>Saturdays</u>					
		TB		X				TB		TB				TB
TROWBRIDGE, Town Hall	--	0855	1100	--	1240	1410	1555	1710	--	--	1100	1310	1510	1710
Bradford on Avon, Bridge	0751	B	1111	--	1251	B	B	B	0825	--	1111	1321	B	B
Holt, Three Lions	0756	0911	1116	--	1256	1428	1613	1728	0830	--	1116	1326	1528	1728
Holt, Station Road	--	0913	R	--	R	R	R	R	R	--	R	R	R	R
Broughton Gifford, Fox	--	0918	1121	--	1301	1433	1618	1733	0835	--	1121	1331	1533	1733
Melksham, Market Place	0806	0928	1131	1200	1311	1443	1628	1743	0845	0850	1131	1341	1543	1743
Melksham, Asda	--	0931	--	1203	R	1446	--	1746	--	0853	1134	R	1546	1746
Dunch Lane	--	0934	--	--	R	R	--	R	--	0856	1137	R	R	R
Shaw, Church	--	0937	--	1206	R	R	--	R	--	0859	1140	R	R	R
Atworth, Clock	--	0939	--	--	R	1451	--	1751	--	0901	1142	R	1551	1751
Atworth, Purlpit	--	0944	--	--	R	1454	--	1754	--	0906	1147	R	1554	1754
Whitley, Corsham Road	--	0949	--	1209	R	1459	--	1759	--	0911	1152	R	1559	1759
Gastard, Harp & Crown	--	0952	--	1214	--	1504	--	1804	--	0914	1155	--	1604	1804
Corsham, Town Centre	--	0958	--	1220	--	1510	--	1810	--	0920	1200	--	1610	1810

Please note that the Zig Zag bus would be required to undertake school journeys between 0820 and 0855, and between 1510 and 1600

Key: **B** - This journey runs via Staverton where it forms part of town bus service 68
R - The bus will only call at this point if required by passengers on the bus
X - this journey may only operate on certain days of the week

TB - This journey would be operated by a Trowbridge Town or Melksham Town service bus (as at present).