

2 August 2013

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

Our ref: IW/PTB302

Dear Consultee

Review of council-funded bus services in north west Wiltshire

The Council is currently reviewing the bus services which it funds in the north west of the county. Changes are proposed to many of these services, and I am therefore writing to ask for your views on the proposed changes, which it is intended will be introduced in April 2014.

This is part of an ongoing series of reviews of bus services across the county, which aim 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 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. They are therefore looking in particular at poorly-used services or journeys that require a relatively high level of council funding in relation to the number of passengers they carry.

The help of the area boards and community area partnerships is being sought to identify local needs and priorities, and possible ways of meeting local transport and access needs in an affordable way. As well as making changes to bus services, this could also include developing local initiatives such as 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. More information about the fund can be found on Community First's website at; <http://www.communityfirst.org.uk/index.php/grants/community-transport-small-grants-fund>

The proposals

The following services in the Malmesbury Community Area will be affected by the review;

Service 30	Malmesbury town bus
Service 31	Malmesbury – Swindon
Service 41	Malmesbury – Yate
Service 50/52	Minety / Ashton Keynes area services
Service 75	Sherston / Luckington – Chippenham (Fridays only)
Service 76	Malmesbury – Sherston – Bath (Wednesdays only)
Service 91	Malmesbury – Chippenham via Dauntsey Vale
Service 92	Malmesbury – Chippenham via Hullavington
Service 93	Malmesbury – Cirencester
Service 95	Brinkworth – Chippenham via Bremhill

Other services in north west Wiltshire will also be affected, and **I attach for information a list of all the services included in the review**, summarising the changes that are proposed to be made to each.

In the Malmesbury area the rationale behind the proposals that are being put forward is to maintain the strategic links that exist between Malmesbury and the surrounding towns, while seeking to reduce costs so as to make the bus network as a whole more sustainable and affordable for the future. Some of the rural services are poorly used and it is proposed to reduce the level of service to reflect the use made of them, while continuing to provide a service that will meet essential access needs. In some cases community or voluntary transport may be an alternative.

The consultation

For each of the services in the Malmesbury Community Area that are affected by the review, **an information sheet is attached** which includes a commentary on the service that is currently provided, and details of the proposed changes.

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 in some cases 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 **7 October 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 via the Area Board manager to town and parish councils; councillors; and other local groups or organisations who may want to respond. It has also been sent to some countywide organisations, and to local community transport groups.

Where significant changes are proposed, questionnaires will also be made available on the buses so that users are able to comment on the proposals. Copies of the user questionnaires, and of the information sheets for other services that are not attached to this letter, are available on the council's website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/consultations, or can be requested from the address above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian White', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ian White
Head of Service Passenger Transport

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