

Review of bus services in North West Wiltshire

Shoppers' services from the area north west of Chippenham – info sheet

Service 36 (Castle Combe – Chippenham via Colerne and Corsham, Tuesdays and Fridays only)

Service 75 (Norton – Chippenham via Badminton and Burton, Fridays only)

Service 76 (Malmesbury – Bath via Sherston and Badminton, Wednesdays only)

Service 76A (Hullavington – Bath via Castle Combe and Biddestone, Wednesdays only)

Summary of proposed change

All of the above services are poorly used and it is proposed to use the consultation as an opportunity to seek the views of local communities on the needs that they meet, and to assist in identifying affordable and sustainable ways of meeting these needs in the future.

Commentary on current service

Services into Chippenham and Corsham;

Service 36 provides Tuesday and Friday shopping opportunities in Corsham and Chippenham, from Castle Combe, Grittleton, Yatton Keynell, Colerne, Ford and Biddestone. Use on Tuesdays is poor, with an average of 6 passengers each way. Use on Friday is better, with an average of 18 passengers a week travelling each way. There are rarely any passengers from Castle Combe, Grittleton or Yatton Keynell (who have another more frequent service to Chippenham), and although there are two return journeys from Chippenham virtually all passengers use the earlier (1220) departure. Very few passengers travel to/from Corsham (average of 1 a day), with virtually all using the service to travel to Chippenham.

Service 75 provides a Friday only shopping opportunity in Chippenham from Norton, Sherston, Sopworth, Luckington, Alderton, Badminton, Acton Turville, West Kington, Nettleton, Burton, and North Wraxall. Use is very poor, with usually only 2 or 3 passengers each way (maximum of 6), travelling from Sherston, Nettleton and sometimes Longleaze. (note that the Monday to Friday journeys on service 75 arriving in Chippenham at 8.30am and returning at 2.55pm and 5.30pm are required for school and college students and will continue to run as now)

Services into Bath;

Services 76 and 76A provide a Wednesdays only shopping opportunity in Bath from Malmesbury, Easton Grey, Sherston, Sopworth, Luckington, Alderton, Badminton, Acton Turville, Burton, Nettleton and West Kington, and from Hullavington, Stanton St Quintin, Norton, Grittleton, The Gibb, Castle Combe, Yatton Keynell, Biddestone, Ford, North Wraxall and Marshfield. The service 76 bus only carries an average of 5 passengers a week each way, and service 76A only carries between 6 and 10 passengers a week each way from the Wiltshire villages. These are joined by on average 16 passengers a week who travel from Marshfield into Bath.

Explanation of proposed changes

The current services are poorly used, and with the increasing costs of operating conventional bus services are unlikely to be financially sustainable in the long term. This consultation is therefore being used as an opportunity to seek the views of local communities on the needs that the current services meet, and to ask them assist with identifying affordable and sustainable ways of meeting these needs in the future.

Consultation questions

What needs should be met by any future services?

Questionnaires are being made available on the buses to establish the following;

- How many people use the current services, for what purpose, and how often do they travel
- How important are the services to them and how well do they meet their needs
- Their views on possible options for how the service might be provided in future

Possible options for future service provision

No specific proposals are being put forward at this stage, but depending on the needs that are identified from the questionnaires, a number of possible options for future service provision are suggested below as a basis for discussion;

- Provide a conventional bus service as now, but at a reduced cost by running fewer journeys (for example by combining services, withdrawing sections of route where there are no regular passengers, and possibly reducing service 36 to operate on just one day a week, depending on level of use)
- Set up a community transport service that can provide a service more responsive to local needs at an affordable cost, using either minibuses or cars as appropriate
- Consider whether a better service might be provided by a voluntary car scheme taking people to and from the nearest connecting point for more regular bus services (e.g to Castle Combe to meet bus service 35 to Chippenham; to Colerne to meet service 228 to Bath; and/or to Marshfield to meet service 635 to Chippenham / Bristol)

If you have other suggestions about how the needs of the area might be met at an affordable cost, or if you or a group you represent would be interested in helping to take this forward, we would be glad to hear from you.

Similar information sheets are available for each of the bus services affected by the North West Wiltshire review. A consultation on the proposals is under way and will close on 7 October 2013. Details of other services and of the consultation can be found on the council's website (<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council/consultations.htm>) or are available from the Passenger Transport Unit, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Trowbridge BA14 8JN.