

APPENDIX 2A

Withdrawal of early morning free travel

Results of consultation

Conclusions from questionnaire:

Do you think the free travel concession should start at 0900 on Mondays to Fridays?

1. The questionnaire for individuals showed a slight preference for the earlier start time of 0900 (57% / 43%). This corresponds with the very frequently mentioned themes of travel to early medical appointments, the limited number of morning buses available and the need for disabled people to get to work.
2. There was no significant difference between the answers to the above question given by people with a bus pass due to disability and those with a pass due to age. Slightly more people who considered themselves disabled preferred a 0900 start, but this was hardly significant and less than might be expected considering the concern about early medical appointments. Overall, there was not a huge variation in the answer based on geography either except for a higher preference in Bradford on Avon and Mere, which may be due to individual features of the bus service there. The average for the urban areas of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury is similar to the average for all areas overall, so there is not a difference between urban and rural areas in the answers to this question. There is no discernible pattern related to age and no variation between male and female respondents.

Do you think the free travel concession should start at 0930 on Mondays to Fridays?

3. A third favoured the 0930 start time with two thirds against (36/64). Although there were very frequently mentioned themes appreciating the need to save money and freeing up seats in the peak for workers and schoolchildren, it appeared that many respondents were of the opinion that the peak ended at 0900.
4. Holders of a pass due to age, disability, non-Wiltshire pass holders and respondents without a pass were all strongly against the 0930 start and particularly strongly amongst holders of a pass due to disability. There was marked variation between community areas, but not according to rural or urban. The biggest percentage against was in Wilton (80%), whilst the smallest was in rural Pewsey (38%). Age was a factor, with older age groups less likely to be against the later start. There was no variation between male and female respondents. Slightly more of those who considered themselves disabled were against the 0930 start compared with those not disabled, but not a strong variation considering that disability was a frequently mentioned theme. Unexpectedly, there was a strong variation between online and on

paper responses with the online responders 84% against while the on paper responders were only 48% against. This may be explained if the paper responders were predominantly in the older age groups, who are less likely to be against the late start.

Do you think the new starting time should apply to people with a bus pass because of disability in the same way as people with a bus pass because of their age?

5. Overall, as many people favoured disabled users having same start time as not (50/50). However, within the overall figure, those with a bus pass because of their disability tended to be against having the same start time, (61% against), reflecting the frequent comment that disabled people need help to go to work. This preference was masked in the overall figures by the more numerous age related bus pass holders who preferred the start times to be the same (44% against). This corresponds with a very frequent comment that older people face many of the same problems as disabled people so it is fair for them both to enjoy the same travel benefits.
6. However, among people who considered themselves to have a disability, there was a much more equal balance between those for and against having the same start time (54% for and 46% against). This seems counter-intuitive but might be explained by individual interpretation of the question, with many who consider themselves disabled wanting the same exemption as those holding disabled bus passes.
7. Age was also an important factor, with older people more likely to favour both groups having the same start time. 81% of the 25-34 age group were against disabled people having the same start time, whereas 64% of those 85+ were in favour. There was no variation between the sexes.

Why do you need free bus travel before 0900 on Monday to Friday?

8. Although 50% said they did not need free travel before 0900, of those that did, the need to attend medical and hospital appointments stands out as the most frequently given reason. This was also the most frequent theme in the comments. This was true for those holding passes due to both age and disability (and also for those having passes from other authorities). There was little variation in this between community areas, with between a third and a half needing to get to medical appointments on average across the county. This was the case for the older age groups (45 and older), but younger age groups had other main reasons – 73% of the 25 -34 age group needed it to go to work and 89% of the under 18s needed it to go to education. (These age groups of course have passes because of their disability)
9. Overall, the second most frequently given reason for travel was for shopping and other appointments, which was given only half as often as medical appointments. For those holding passes due to disability (and non-Wiltshire passes) the second most important reason for use was journeys to work (35% of disabled pass holders gave this reason) but not surprisingly it hardly featured among those with passes due to age (6%).

10. A significant majority of those who considered themselves to have a disability needed their pass to go to medical appointments. Broken down by description of disability the percentages were:

Physical or mobility impairment	67%
Mental health condition	71%
Long standing illness	70%
Learning disability / difficulty	55%
Sensory impairment	56%
Other	63%

This makes sense as people with an ongoing health condition will frequently need to attend medical appointments.

Why do you need free bus travel before 0930 on Monday to Friday?

11. 35% said they did not need free travel before 0930 but of those that did the need to attend medical appointments was again by far the most frequently mentioned, roughly twice as often as the next most mentioned need, which was for shopping.
12. The breakdown between holders of different types of pass was in line with those who needed travel before 0900. 50% of those with passes due to age and 62% of those with passes due to disability needed it for hospital and medical appointments. 35% of those with passes due to disability needed it for work.
13. There was considerable variation between community areas but not following any obvious pattern. 60% responding from Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade needed the pass for medical appointments, but only 35% from Pewsey.
14. Again, significant percentages of the younger age groups needed pre 0930 travel for work – 81% of the 25-34 group and 36% of the 35-44 group. Also 95% of under-18s needed it for education.
15. There was no variation by gender.
16. Again, a significant majority of those who considered themselves to have a disability needed their pass to go to medical appointments. Broken down by description of disability the percentages were:
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Physical or mobility impairment | 72% |
| Mental health condition | 72% |
| Long standing illness | 76% |
| Learning disability / difficulty | 55% |
| Sensory impairment | 67% |
| Other | 70% |

This makes sense as people with an ongoing health condition will frequently need to attend medical appointments.

Do you hold a Wiltshire Bus Pass?

17. Of the respondents, 7% had a bus pass because of their disability and nearly all the others had one because of their age. This is as expected because, in order to ensure there was a good response from service users, questionnaires were sent directly to a sample of 3,000 bus pass holders. The percentage of respondents having a bus pass because of their disability is similar to the percentage of bus passes issued to this group of people, showing that this group is adequately represented in the results.

Your Postcode?

18. The postcodes of those who responded were widely spread over Wiltshire's community areas, with responses from both urban and rural community areas.

Your Age?

19. Half the respondents were in the 65-74 age group, with the number of responses tailing off at both younger and older ages. This is to be expected as younger people would see this matter as being less relevant to them unless they were disabled, whilst amongst retired people, the 65-74 group are expected to be most active.

Your sex?

20. Slightly more respondents were male than female – 55%/45%. As the scheme applies in exactly the same way to both sexes there is no obvious reason for this to affect the answers received.

Your ethnic origin?

21. Similarly ethnic origin would have no bearing on the concessionary travel scheme.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

22. 27% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability. The discrepancy between this figure and the 7% who have a disabled bus pass comes about because many people with a bus pass on grounds of age also consider themselves disabled to some extent. This is backed up by the frequently mentioned theme that as people get older they face many of the same mobility and other problems as disabled people. Also the rules on eligibility for a bus pass are quite objective and specific when dealing with disability and it is known that some people who have justification to consider themselves disabled nevertheless do not meet the eligibility criteria for a bus pass set by government.

Responses received on-line or on paper?

23. Approaching half the responses were received online rather than on paper (41% / 59%). This shows that a good online response can be received from older age groups despite the perception that they are not computer users.

Responses from organisations:

24. 36 responses were received from organisations. Broadly speaking their preferences and comments were in the same vein as the replies from individuals, but often the arguments were more fully developed and have been reproduced in full later in this document.
25. Three of the organisations who responded were concerned that having to pay for travel would make it more difficult for volunteers to participate in their activities. Also three of the four community transport responses were concerned that changes to the free travel start time would have a deleterious effect on their own ability to provide transport. This included the response made on behalf of all 44 Link schemes in Wiltshire.
26. The need for early attendance at medical appointments, the limited times that buses serve rural areas and the need to support disabled people going to work were strongly argued.
27. The split regarding the question of whether free travel should start at 0900 was similar to the individual responses (55% / 45%). However 90% of organisations were against the 0930 starting time. Two thirds of the organisations considered that a different start time should apply for disabled people.
28. When asked why people need free bus travel before 0900 or 0930, in both cases travel to medical appointments was the most frequently given reason, with leisure activities given as the second most frequent reason.

Summary results - Questionnaire for individuals

Should the free travel concession start at 0900 on Mondays to Fridays?

Yes	1605	57%
No	1209	43%

Should the free travel concession start at 0930 on Mondays to Fridays?

Yes	939	36%
No	1653	64%

Should the new starting time apply to people with a bus pass because of their disability in the same way as people with a bus pass because of their age?

Yes	1384	50%
No	1374	50%

Do you hold a Wiltshire Bus Pass?

No, I do not have a bus pass	124	4%
No, I do not have a Wiltshire Bus Pass but I have one issued by another local authority	23	1%
Yes, I have a Wiltshire bus pass because of my disability (the bus pass has an orange stripe down the right hand side)	195	7%
Yes, I have a Wiltshire bus pass because of my age (the bus pass has a blue stripe down the right hand side)	2595	88%

Why do you need free travel before 0900 on weekdays? (People could choose multiple reasons in this question)

Do not need free travel before 0900	1406	50%
To go to work	248	9%
To go to School or college	102	4%
To go to medical appointments	1153	41%
To go to the shops, banks, etc.	517	18%

To visit friends or relatives	376	13%
For leisure activities	366	13%
For other reasons	388	14%

Why do you need free bus travel before 0930 on weekdays? (People could choose multiple reasons in this question)

Do not need free travel before 0930	917	35%
To go to work	232	9%
to go to school or college	97	4%
To go to medical appointments	1333	50%
To go to the shops, banks, etc.	735	28%
To visit friends or relatives	448	17%
For leisure activities	501	19%
For other reasons	447	17%

The questions 1b), 2b), 3b), 7 and 8 asked for free text comments regarding the proposals. It was clear that the replies followed several themes that were relevant to the proposals and these are listed below. The number of respondents mentioning each theme is recorded and also shown as a percentage:

Themes		
Free bus travel is needed to get to medical appointments and particularly hospital appointments as these are early in the morning.	952	19%
Free bus travel is needed to encourage and help disabled people get to work.	470	10%
Services, especially rural ones, are so infrequent that early morning travel is essential to get to destination early enough.	380	8%
Offers or suggestions involving payment, means testing or changing the groups eligible.	253	5%
Free early morning travel is needed to make longer journeys and make connections: examples given included journeys between Wiltshire towns that involve changing buses, journeys to railway stations and journeys to Bournemouth or Weymouth.	250	5%
Stopping early morning travel will make peak hour buses less crowded so people going to work or education can get seats and have a better journey.	232	5%
As people get older they face many of the same mobility and other problems as disabled people so it is fair that older people and disabled people should have the same	175	4%

access to free early morning travel.		
Disabled people need free travel to get to medical and hospital appointments early morning.	170	3%
Appreciate that stopping early morning travel is needed to make savings.	163	3%
Free early morning travel is needed to help people get to work.	148	3%
Retired and disabled people can be flexible about their travel times and travel later to get the benefit of free travel.	146	3%
Free early morning travel is needed for shopping and early appointments.	146	3%
Disabled people need free early morning travel because they cannot be as flexible about when they can arrange to travel and it takes them longer to make journeys.	140	3%
Free early morning travel helps people to get out and about for leisure and to visit people which improves their well being.	125	3%
Suggestions about changes to bus services including park and ride.	120	2%
Stopping free early morning travel will lead to more people using their cars. This is not environmentally friendly, will clog up car parks, roads and older drivers bring road safety issues.	111	2%
Older people like to make an early start to avoid the crowds and get back before lunch or before it gets dark.	108	3%
People travelling to work can afford to pay, so do not need early morning free travel.	104	2%
Travel would be unaffordable without using the free bus pass.	102	2%
Disabled people are already disadvantaged and on low incomes so we should give them all the help we can.	102	2%
People who have no car or cannot drive depend on the bus.	97	2%
Free early morning travel allows people to undertake unpaid voluntary work without a financial penalty to themselves and without creating expenses for the charity they work for.	94	2%
Early morning buses are not used much. People prefer to use them because they are not busy.	92	2%
Stopping free travel in the early morning will lead to overcrowding on buses at the beginning of the free travel period.	71	1%
Disabled people need free early morning travel to get to education.	49	1%
Stopping early morning free travel will reduce the use of early morning buses so much that they will become uneconomical and will be withdrawn.	35	1%
Free early morning travel is needed to get to education	33	1%

and for grandparents to take children to education.		
Comments about school bus passes.	33	1%
Disabled people already get other benefits to help them.	27	1%
Nowadays people can afford to pay for their travel.	19	0%

Total number of responses received before closing date: 2975

Breakdown by Community Area

Amesbury	190	7%
Bradford on Avon	163	6%
Calne	90	3%
Chippenham	189	7%
Corsham	119	7%
Devizes	192	7%
Malmesbury	85	3%
Marlborough	80	3%
Melksham	179	7%
Mere	30	1%
Pewsey	59	2%
Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade	177	7%
Salisbury	277	11%
Southern Wiltshire (Downton)	214	8%
Tidworth	50	2%
Tisbury	23	1%
Trowbridge	185	7%
Warminster	144	6%
Westbury	94	4%
Wilton	86	3%

Breakdown by age

Under 18	18	1%
18-24	15	1%
25-34	26	1%
35-44	44	2%
45-54	95	3%
55-64	417	15%
65-74	1405	50%
75-84	643	23%
85+	161	6%

Gender

Male	1573	55%
Female	1281	45%

How do you describe your ethnic origin?

White	2760	99%
Mixed	6	0%
Asian or Asian British	10	0%
Black or black British	4	0%
Other ethnic group	20	1%

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes	765	27%
No	2029	73%

Method of response

Online	1233	41%
Paper	1742	59%

Summary results - Questionnaire for groups and organisations

Should the free travel concession start at 0900 on Mondays to Fridays?

Yes	17	55%
No	14	45%

Should the free travel concession start at 0930 on Mondays to Fridays?

Yes	3	10%
No	26	90%

Should the new starting time apply to people with a bus pass because of their disability in the same way as people with a bus pass because of their age?

Yes	11	37%
No	19	63%

Why do the people you represent need free bus travel before 0900 on weekdays?
(People could choose multiple reasons in this question)

Do not need travel before 0900	6	19%
To go to work	14	45%
To go to school or college	10	32%
To go to medical appointments	22	71%
To go to the shops, banks etc.	14	45%
To visit friends or relatives	15	48%
For leisure activities	16	52%
For other reasons	10	32%

Why do the people you represent need free bus travel before 0930 on weekdays?
(People could choose multiple reasons in this question)

Do not need travel before 0930	4	13%
To go to work	15	50%
To go to school or college	9	30%
To go to medical appointments	23	77%
To go to the shops, banks etc.	16	53%
To visit friends or relatives	16	53%
For leisure activities	17	56%
For other reasons	11	37%

The following is a list of the organisations who responded together with the comments they made:

AgeUK Salisbury District - We represent the views of older people in South Wiltshire. We have conducted a telephone survey of older people to help inform our response.

Our organisation relies on volunteers to operate effectively. Many of our volunteers deliver front line services during normal business hours. They use bus passes to attend 'work' and would struggle to find the money for the bus fare. Whilst the charity would reimburse the costs this will be a significant drain on our resources. More clarity on how the cost savings will be made would assist the debate. The cost saving information is not detailed and the range of savings suggests that the data is imprecise. This appears to be driven by policy alignment with neighbours rather than cost. WE have asked for more detail but it has not been forthcoming.

Age UK Wiltshire - the leading voluntary sector organisation working with and supporting older people, their families and carers across the county and the neighbouring Borough of Swindon. We are a recognised, respected and trusted organisation and have been supporting and enabling the older people of Wiltshire since 1949. We are committed to ensuring that all people in later life are supported to have equal chances and rights within their communities and, actively promote the wellbeing of all older people within the county to make life an enjoyable and fulfilling experience. Our information and advice, support and services are available to all older people within Wiltshire.

Within a predominantly rural county, the availability of transport services to an increasingly ageing population often represents a 'lifeline' for older people particularly as it facilitates their access to family, friends, health and social care and other amenities. With particular reference to access to health, the amendment of the time from which the free travel concession starts to 0900hrs will almost certainly adversely impact upon the ability of certain older people (particularly in more rural locations) to travel at no cost in order to attend early/morning appointments and/or treatments at one of the three acute hospitals serving the county. Much focus is given to the need to more closely integrate health and social care services across Wiltshire however, Age UK Wiltshire would suggest that the integration of those services that are key to the ultimate wellbeing and independence of older people must also include underlying infrastructures such as transport. Indeed, it can be argued that transport services represent a facilitator/enabler for the realisation of the closer integration of health and social care from the perspective of older people.

Additionally, there are many charitable organisations throughout Wiltshire (including Age UK Wiltshire) that rely upon the services of volunteers; many of whom are eligible for concessionary travel. Any withdrawal/deferral regarding the times during which concessionary travel might be accessed will almost certainly impact upon the availability of such volunteers at key times of the day.

Research by Age UK has evidenced the following key statistics regarding the availability and importance of transport services to older people resident within more rural locations:

1. 35% of rural pensioner households have no access to a vehicle
2. In 2009, only 47% had an hourly (or better) public transport service within 13 minutes' walk of their home

3. Rural households spend almost £20 more each week on transport compared to urban dwellers

Whilst Age UK Wiltshire is appreciative of the fact that Wiltshire Council faces increasing financial pressures, it is estimated that the average annual cost associated with 'bus passes' and based upon existing availabilities is £53.48 per qualifying capita. The average annual savings forecast to be realised from the revision of the concession start time to 0900hrs (and based upon the upper savings estimate contained within the 'consultation factsheet') equates to £2.53 per qualifying capita. When considering the facts that the availability of concessionary travel at all times must be considered to be an important part of the overall wellbeing and independence of older people (stated strategic objectives of Wiltshire Council, NHS Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Joint Health & Wellbeing Board) and that when compared against many other local authorities Wiltshire spends less per capita on social care, the key consideration should be what might be the effective reduction upon the return on social capital/investment that a notional saving of up to £2.53 per capita per annum might generate?

Finally, and with particular reference to the attendance of older people at early day appointments and/or treatments at acute hospitals, should consideration be given to applying a net reduction to the realisable savings that might be caused by any increase in 'did not arrive' ('DNA') costs borne by the NHS?

It is however, felt to be worthy of note that whilst the underlying issues associated with the amendment to the commencement of travel concessions to 0900hrs remain valid, any further delay to a commencement time of 0930hrs would further exacerbate the impacts upon older people particularly when considering the difficulties that would be faced by the need to attend earlier appointment/treatment times at one of the acute hospitals. Furthermore, an additional delay in the commencement time to 0930hrs would (based upon the same methodology as above) realise an average saving of only £3.44 per capita per annum (ie. an increase saving over a 0900hrs commencement of £0.91). The main (and stated) strategies for older people and those of any age with some form of 'qualifying disability' are to promote the wellbeing and independence of the individual. This will include support in terms of their access to employment and/or volunteering opportunities; indeed for many of these cohorts, the ability to participate in some form of paid employment or community/voluntary related activities should no longer be considered an option but actions that are either directly required by the individual concerned (income related) or the wider community (benefits to the local authority).

Age UK Wiltshire notes that within the 'council factsheet', passing consideration would appear to have been given to the possibility of making exemptions for some rural services so that passes are accepted before the normal time on those services only. It is also noted that Wiltshire Council concluded that the implementation of such exemptions might prove to be unworkable. It is suggested that even if such exemptions were to be implemented, for many of those older people living within the more rural parts of the county, exemptions of this nature would not represent a solution to many of the problems identified by Age UK Wiltshire and those older people with whom it has consulted. For example, an older person living within a rural community needing to travel by public transport to one of the acute hospitals for an early morning

appointment/treatment would also certainly need to travel to one of the larger conurbations (e.g. 'transport hubs') in order to transfer onto another connection (bus) in order to complete their journey. The suggested exemptions, would not resolve the wider transport problem.

Age UK Wiltshire believes it to be appropriate to summarise certain of the key points contained within its response as follows:

1. Within a predominantly rural county, the availability of transport services to an increasingly ageing population often represents a 'lifeline' for older people particularly as it facilitates their access to family, friends, health and social care and other amenities
2. With reference to access to health, the amendment of the time from which free travel concessions commence to either 0900hrs or 0930hrs will almost certainly adversely impact upon the ability of certain older people (particularly in more rural locations) to travel at no cost in order to attend early/morning appointments and/or treatments at one of the three acute hospitals serving the county
3. Age UK Wiltshire would suggest that the integration of those services that are key to the ultimate wellbeing and independence of older people must also include underlying infrastructures such as transport. Indeed, it can be argued that transport services represent a facilitator/enabler for the realisation of the closer integration of health and social care from the perspective of older people.
4. There are many charitable organisations throughout Wiltshire that rely upon the services of volunteers; many of whom are eligible for concessionary travel. Any deferment regarding the times during which concessionary travel might be accessed will almost certainly impact upon the availability of such volunteers at key times of the day (or increase the costs to such organisations).

Alan Skinner - PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL. It would restrict the amount of time I can travel in a single day if reduced. Let it remain as it is, I for one would like all time restrictions lifted.

Alderbury Village Hall Management Committee - Use of Hall by people of all ages for entertainment, activities and social. Hall is available for 8am for general use by the whole community including keep fit etc for older people.

The bus services using Alderbury and Whaddon also connect with outlying villages. From 9am this would enable appointments here in the village or in Salisbury and Southampton not too late in the morning. After 9.30 the first bus from this area would be 9.50 am making for a late start for the reason for travelling. A subsidised fare would probably be acceptable on the early buses. Any person on benefit exempted.

Many people having a pass do not have the use of a car for many reasons. If the traveller is unable to have a lift to enable him/her access to meet appointments or onward travel or classes for health and leisure they will have to travel on a later bus.

Restrictions on busy routes are obviously difficult but in this area the buses are only half full with school children and workers which seems ridiculous to not allow further passengers. Is the government subsidy the same rate all day.

Anstie Court – 50 Older and disabled people.

0900 start - early in the day and to avoid business travel. 0930 - Reasonable time to travel.

Ashton Keynes householder - it is very reasonable that the concession is not available before 0900 as these bus services are needed for workers to travel to work. It

should start at 0900 because this is when the spare capacity becomes available.

It would probably lead to the withdrawal of the 50 service in Ashton Keynes to Swindon as the 09:00 service only has a few passengers and they may stop using the service because of the cost. The only later service is one way - there is no return on the same day. The savings on a 0930 start, which I assume are based on current usage, may not be as high as estimated as travellers who are going on an outing and not an appointment will get the later bus instead. To some extent, the time of appointments can be "controlled", e.g dentist and optician.

Chalke Valley Link Scheme - provides relief to the poor, sick, elderly, disabled or those in need in the area of the Chalke Valley between Berwick St. John and Bodenham inclusive, by providing or assisting in the provision of care and transport services calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons. Our assistance is available to all eligible residents within the area covered by the Scheme. The total population of that area is approximately 4,185.

The earliest time at which bus pass holders living in Berwick St John, Alvediston and Ebbesbourne Wake and travelling by the No. 29 bus (from Shaftesbury to Salisbury via the Chalke Valley Villages) would be able reach the bus stop at Salisbury District Hospital with the free travel benefit of their bus passes will be 11.15 am which is more than 2 hours after outpatients' clinics open. That does not take account of the additional time that they will need to get from the bus stop to the relevant hospital department. Those needing to visit Doctors' and Dentists surgeries in central Salisbury would not be so able to reach New Canal Salisbury before 11.27. Both times are too late and will increase waiting times for appointments later in the day. The requirement for later appointments will also cause delay on account of the time taken to alter earlier appointments already made.

People with a disability are in a better position than those without a disability to obtain access to alternative free travel, e.g. via Link Schemes. The proposal should not apply to bus pass holders who are able show the bus driver evidence that they are travelling for a medical appointment before, say, 11.45 am, e.g. by showing the driver the associated appointment letter or card. Chalke Valley Link Scheme does not exist to provide alternative means of transport to members of the public resident within its area who are reasonably able to use public transport.

The issues in this response apply equally to Chalke Valley resident bus pass holders travelling in the opposite direction to medical appointments in or around Shaftesbury.

Cricklade Town Council –

Free travel from 0900 would enable those entitled to travel concessions to catch the 0924 bus from Cricklade to Swindon and thereby attend day centres and medical appointments for example. If free travel was not available until after 0930, the first bus to Swindon would be 1029. Providing the starting time is 0900, not 0930, people with a bus pass because of their disability can access day centres in Swindon, for example.

If Wiltshire Council decides on a 0930 start for travel concessions, should be flexible for those travelling in rural areas so they can travel before 0900. A 0930 start for concessionary travel would severely restrict the travel of older and disabled people in Cricklade and their access to services out of the town.

Devizes Community Area Partnership - Community Area: transport interest group (Community wide).

The 0900 timing should not affect shoppers, but we are saying no because:
(a) pensioners who need to get to work by bus are likely to be in low paid employment.
(b) Those who live in villages are further disadvantaged by infrequency of services and poor connections.
(c) Those who are unable to drive through disability of working age will be disadvantaged. Bus fares are very expensive and might make the difference between making a journey to work or claiming benefits. All pass holders with a disability should be exempt and given a special pass.

Services with critical connections should be exempt e.g. services from villages to an interchange. We are pleased to see that you have recognised exceptions to board before 9am/9.30am.

Very concerned about a consultation that did not reach off-line pass-holders. We have had to print out copies for some. This is contrary to the letter and spirit of the equalities act. Whilst the levels of savings are a good reason for considering this change in policy we are very surprised by the expected levels of savings. For instance, £100,000 or £200,000 saving @ 50p compensation to bus operators equals 200,000 – 400,000 single pass holder journeys per year made before 9am. We wonder whether this is realistic and whether bus operator data has been sampled.

DEVIZES TOWN COUNCIL –

CERTAIN DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE ESPECIALLY THOSE IN MORE REMOTE LOCATIONS WILL SUFFER FINANCIAL HARDSHIP IF THEY LOSE THE CONCESSION AND THIS COULD BE CONSIDERED AS DISCRIMINATORY. CARERS ALSO NEED TO BE CONSIDERED. IT COULD START AT 9.30 IF THE PEOPLE IDENTIFIED ABOVE CAN BE PROTECTED.

IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF INDIVIDUALS. NOT ALL DISABLED PEOPLE WOULD NEED TO TRAVEL BEFORE 9.30 FOR EXAMPLE. RETAIN EXISTING CONCESSIONS UNTIL WE CAN SEE THE FULL PICTURE. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD WHAT THE COST SAVINGS ARE BUT NOT THE DISBENEFITS TO CERTAIN CLASSES OF PEOPLE. ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS NEED THAT SUPPORTING INFORMATION.

Devizes Town Council –

A 0900 start to free travel gives older people and their carers more time to shop when the shops are relatively quiet. Disabled people have a greater need in doctors' appointments, etc. Disabled people, blind people and their carers should have free bus passes for all times of day. The Devizes town service could be slightly reduced but still offer the frequency required.

Eileen Cook (Private) – On behalf of older people.

I actually believe that we should be able to continue to use it as it is. The numbers of people using the pass early are not that great. Most older people like early starts and often have early hospital appointments etc to get to and if they cannot start their journey till after 9.30 it means they would not reach their destinations until nearly lunchtime. As

stated before travelling into Bath as I do once a week on the 8.15 getting to Bath before 9 for onward travel. Most of the people travelling onto Bath are travelling once a week into Bath. I try to avoid going to Bath at the weekend preferring to go when it is quieter. Personally if I could not travel into Bath on the bus before 9am I would pay the bus fare to travel in or use my car!

I believe that travelling from the countryside (Corsham and Chippenham) that we should be an exception as the buses are not overcrowded and that it is better value for us to go in by bus than revert to travelling by car which is the other option especially as the bus company have stopped issuing return tickets and the only option is a day ticket at £7.

Foggy's – for people with invisible illnesses like fibromyalgia, CFS, ME IBS, PMR, GCA. 70 members.

Prefer 0900 to allow those registered with impairment to travel to work or voluntary opportunities. 0930 would be too late to allow any valuable presence in the workforce in the morning. In this largely rural County, bus travel may be the only link between villages and larger towns, the number of available journeys small, any delay reduces time at the destination, possible by 2 hours or more.

Careful consideration should be made of bus timetabling to ensure a viable service is still offered to those less able who are often on very low incomes or benefits and who rely on the bus services for medical care as well as the opportunities of work. Many in the disabled community do not drive and rely heavily on their bus service to access necessary services. How else will they reach their destination?

Go South Coast trading as Salisbury Reds - Public Transport.

In the long term 0900 will not be affordable for the Council and this is not the statutory requirement and therefore an extra and unnecessary cost for the council to be burdened with particularly when it is otherwise having to cut funding for services which then will not be operating anyway. Starting at other than 0930 undermines commercial bus services and the free travel concession was never intended to allow people free travel to work. It is intended to help with access to socially necessary services. For disabled people it depends on circumstances and nature of the disability

Ian West - Wiltshire Councillor representing Rural People in nine villages.

The time should be left as it is so that people can get to appointments etc. I have said YES to 9am because it is the least damaging. People should be allowed to use their bus passes as they do now ie on the first available bus out of their village in the morning as buses only run every hour at the best in rural areas your proposals are detrimental to the rural way of life. Some people would not be able to use their bus passes under your proposals probably till around 10-30am until in rural areas. The time should be left as it for all bus pass users so that people can get to appointments etc. Your proposals will put tremendous pressure on rural Link schemes PLEASE THINK AGAIN.

Interested individual - A new bus pass holder - got mine last week!

It will restrict wider travelling when connecting with other bus operators because of the need to start the journey sooner. The earliest free travel buses are likely to be extremely busy and overcrowded; meaning some people further along the routes may not be able to get on. Expect an unseemly rush for the first bus!

Some disabled people may be travelling to work so their ability to use earlier buses is particularly important. Is there any evidence that people over 60 are taking up seats which would otherwise be paid for? Where is the evidence for this? If the buses are not full at peak times, then people with passes should be able to use them.

LINK Schemes - Provide support and Secretariat to 44 Link Good Neighbour Volunteer Run Transport schemes across Wiltshire. 44 schemes - 1,750 volunteers.

There is a concern amongst some Link schemes that any changes to the current system could put more pressure on schemes to provide transport solutions before 9:00am. Link schemes already travel nearly one million miles a year, providing transport solutions for primarily older and vulnerable people. The Link schemes themselves are facing cuts as part of concessionary fares cuts and any further pressures on the service could be detrimental to what some schemes can offer. The primary concern is that extra demand will come from people trying to access health and medical appointments. Concession starting at 9:00am would lessen demand and the potential detrimental effect outlined. Whiteparish and Landford Scheme said: Recently our LINK scheme had a record 33 calls in one week on our service, of which we were able to fulfil 30. We are struggling to recruit enough drivers to cope with increasing demand. Without a shadow of a doubt, the proposed change to the concessionary bus fares will increase pressure on LINK, beyond our ability to cope. Hospitals and clinics do not take into account bus times when they issue appointments. We therefore oppose any change to the current arrangement; no restriction on times when concessionary fares are available, and no restriction on people freely accompanying disabled travellers.

As detailed above concession starting at 0930 has the potential to increase demand on Link schemes for early travel. This could result in difficulties to find willing drivers and put pressure on this voluntary service.

There is a particular concern that people with disabilities needing to access transport to work should not be penalised. The ideal would be to keep things as they are - an alternative to this would be to continue and extend support of the Link and Community bus services to ensure gaps in travel can be better supported.

There has been no suggestion on the likely affect changes will make on older people (grandparents, relatives, guardians) providing or supporting childcare arrangements. Older family or friends supporting childcare before school or work is important for many parents that work or require support. By restricting concession timings cost for childcare could increase for parents and guardians, or make it less viable for them to work. Resulting in both pressure on family budgets and to the economy.

Melksham Seniors- Older people, 400+ members

Much prefer the timing to be flexible to fit into appropriate local time table. For instance bus departs 0855 and next one say is in half an hour or later. Especially for appointments at RUH. Prefer to be based on arrival time at the terminus, in which case 0930 arrival time would be appropriate. Another suggestion to test out - why not 9am say 0900 on even dates & 0930 on odd dates or vice versa. The later you start the pick up times the more difficult you make it to travel & return off peak periods.

Social isolation is a killer so the easier we make it for older people to travel and be active, the more we shall be able to cut health bills and delay Care needs. We need to

think outside the box so perhaps our odd day might be worthy of trying.

The economy of many communities are boosted by pensioners shopping locally . Perhaps having what might be known as pensioners days when we encourage pensioners to shop, such as early in the week. (say Monday) . If that was linked to a seniors discount it would increase sales on slow dates. Retailers could link special offers on those slow days to Senior citizens. It is common practice in Canada and some USA States with many benefits.

Mr GR McTavish - This is the statutory start time. At the present time we must all be aware of the financial constraints put on Councils. We must all give a little financial help and find an alternate mode of transport.

Mrs Valerie Pooke - I believe that in Gloucestershire travel concessions start at 9.20am Wiltshire should follow suit. I believe that disabled people should have the same privileges as other people. Would like to see travel passes available earlier than 9.0am

Parent with children of school age.

Some school children's bus journeys start at approximately 07:00 to reach school by the required time due to bus journey duration's. Also why discriminate between disability and age. This is a short term approach and good education is for the long-term good of this great nation and the benefits reaped from having some of the outstanding minds of their generation thanks to the sacrifices made in the past.

Richmond Fellowship - Purpose of RF is to assist people aged 18+ to return to employment, training & education. 150 people.

For Disabled People and those deemed to have a Mental Health Problem but not classed as "Disabled" but not for the older retired OAPs because many disabled people need a boost to get to work on time and rurally the journey will at least take 1 hour to get to most places of work in Wiltshire & other local border counties. Still the majority of employers want a 9am start at least. So I think the free concession should start at 7.30am for Disabled/Mental Health sufferers and therefore improving the local economy of Wiltshire. I think more OAPS will tend to drive nowadays but if you're disabled you would be less likely to drive due to medication and the disability itself.

Ridgeway School on behalf of parents.

To have the free travel pass become valid at 9 a.m. would force parents to have to pay for school passes in order for children to travel and arrive in school before school starts its first session. If parents have to pay, they will also opt for dropping them off at school themselves and this will add to the current traffic congestion at Ridgeway School at the beginning and end of school day. Why should I pay for a travel pass for 2 children if I can adapt my route to work and drop them off on the way? I would just set off earlier and allow for delays and have my children waiting at the school for admittance. I have no comment on users other than my own children who use the school transport buses to get to school each day. The use of free school bus passes to schoolchildren is important to encourage diligent attendance at school and the introduction of free passes after 9 or 9.30 would severely impact attendances and could be interpreted as truancy if parents are unable to get their children to school on time. The only other alternative is to have dedicated school buses where NO passes are required.

Royal National Institute of Blind People - Working for and with people with sight loss. Representing blind and partially sighted people. 13000 members.

For blind and partially sighted people public transport is often the only way of accessing work, college, school, medical appointments and other community and public services. Medical appointments in particular often require travel on weekdays before 9am and it is unfair to restrict the concession to later times for these people. Approximately 14,000 people in Wiltshire are living with sight loss and although not all of these will be users of buses, the impact of this restriction will be significant. We would suggest that if the change to the start time for the concession must be progressed, that it should not apply to those with a registerable visual impairment.

SEEND COMMUNITY BUS - Providing transport for those in the community who have little or no access to other services, particularly the elderly and infirm. We have no members. Our timetabled service runs are Section 22 permit.

The services we run are tailored to peoples' needs and mostly begin at approx 0900. The majority of our passengers use bus passes. If the concession started at 0930, either they would not be able to use their passes or we would have to re-schedule our services at great inconvenience. I can think of no reason why there should be any difference between the hours passes can be used by older and disabled people.

Shrewton Parish Council –

Residents of Shrewton receive a very limited service from the Bus Operator; to prevent their use of a bus at 9:27 into Salisbury would severely restrict their ability to attend health appointments or join in leisure activities and would add to the number of cars on an already congested road system.

It would be preferable to allow usage before 9am to provide the means for disabled workers to get into their employment in time. People of Shrewton would miss buses giving them access to attend early appointments at Salisbury Hospital, causing more requests for Hospital cars or taxis, add more traffic to an already congested road system and cause anxiety and distress to older people who wish to remain independent. Disabled people require more time to get on to the bus, more time to get to appointments and should not be penalised because of their impairment. To withdraw the use of a concessionary bus pass before 9am to disabled people would penalise those who are employed in local towns. The ability to remain independent using public transport enables them to be part of society, doing the same as everyone else. Older people are also more prized as employees and should be able to get to work independently, not adding to the congestion in local towns and cities.

Whilst recognising the financial constraints, it is important for Wiltshire Council to recognise the needs of those residents in rural areas who are without private transport. The use of the bus pass allows disabled and older people freedom to choose and enables them to remain independent. To withdraw this facility would increase the isolation of people in villages, prevent them from attending facilities which are available to those in cities and mean a greater number of cars on the road, due to the use of Link Schemes and taxis to get to appointments.

Steeple Langford Parish Council – Our response follows a period of taking soundings within our community and a discussion in our recent parish council meeting.

The villages that make up the Langfords are situated in the Wylde valley almost equidistant between Salisbury and Warminster. There are no shops, doctors and dentists in the Langfords. The nearest shop providing every day needs and served by a bus route is some 6 miles away in Codford, and the nearest doctors' surgeries are similar distances away. Apart from a twice weekly shopping bus that takes people into Salisbury the only regular means of transport if you don't have a car is the in-frequent X625 bus service.

The Parish Council wishes to make the following points in response to the consultation exercise:

- This consultation, like recent other examples from Wiltshire Council, is flawed in that it does not provide adequate information on which to base a [proper discussion and arrive at a well considered decision. While the consultation documents outline savings figures as a result of the restriction on the use of bus passes, these are presented in isolation as the figures are not set in context of the effect on other services. E.g. Do the savings on bus passes mean that some other service, which may be of greater value to the respondent, is saved? Without this context it is difficult to make a value judgement.
- The Parish Council takes the view that this is yet another example of the rural community being disproportionately disadvantaged. If one of the issues is to keep bus pass users off crowded rush hour buses in towns and cities this does not apply to rural bus routes. Did Wiltshire Council survey the use of passes during the morning rush hour on rural routes and compare them to usage in towns and cities before coming up with the proposed blanket ban? The striving for uniformity across the county does not always serve residents equally as it will disadvantage some to a much greater extent. Pensioners in rural communities are faced with more expensive travel costs.
- By way of illustrating the problem this is a summary of the challenge for an elderly resident using the X625 bus service to keep a hospital appointment at Odstock Hospital. The bus journey into Salisbury takes 25 minutes and with the connection to the service to the hospital it takes a total time of some 45-50 minutes. If the restrictions are applied as suggested an elderly resident hoping to use the bus pass cannot use the bus until 0948 and therefore is unable to attend a hospital appointment before 1100.

Steeple Langford Parish Council is very disappointed that the information provided in consultation papers did not facilitate a more intelligent and informed debate. While we understand the necessity to make savings, we cannot support this measure and believe that the X625 service should be given an exemption from the restriction so that bus passes are accepted at all times; an option that your consultation documents suggest may be possible. Imposing the restriction from either 0900 or 0930 makes no difference to bus pass holders in Steeple Langford as no buses are scheduled during that time in the morning.

St Paul Malmesbury Without Parish Council –

Travel before 0900 travel falls within the peak period when the capacity is needed for travel to work / school. Peak travel period finishes at 0900 and, for longer journeys, the time of arrival would be well into the morning.

The disabled generally have travel requirements similar to those of the able bodied.

Concessionary travel for routes with very limited bus provision should continue at all times as before because travel time flexibility is small or non-existent. An appropriate symbol on timetables should indicate any extended concession.

The Sunday Club - Older People's monthly social afternoon, 65 members

For Doctors/ Hospital appointments students. To enable people to access town easily. Disabled could be travelling to work or college.

Till Valley Link Scheme - We are a voluntary group who befriend, sit with clients, transport, shop for clients, whatever is needed.

We have very few buses now. If we cannot use the early one we cannot get to hospital appointments, go out for the day, visit friends/relatives, shop in town. We do not get buses at weekends/bank holidays or in the evenings. We live in the middle of Salisbury Plain without a bus to our nearest town, Amesbury. It should be possible for most people to afford to pay £1 for every journey they undertake. This would help towards the cost. If bus pass users cannot use the early bus they cannot get to hospital appointments, the next bus after 09.30 is 10.47. This does not give enough time for people to go out for the day, because buses back are non-existent later in the day/evening. The Link Scheme is funded by voluntary contributions from clients. They do not have to pay on the bus, therefore it is cheaper for them.

Tisbury and District Community Minibus Ltd - The Tisbury and District Community Minibus Ltd (TISBUS) provides free and low cost community bus services to Tisbury and its surrounding area. It particularly targets those who find it difficult to get out of their houses to go shopping. It provides a door to door, wheel chair accessible service. Outings and other activities such as school runs are also done. We run 3 minibuses. 400 members.

We start most of our activities at 0900. 0930 is too late for us. We cover both disabled and older people. I have no doubt there are savings to be made but it is not necessary to change the times where financial savings don't exist. We need to be able to pick up people from 0900 onwards. There are days when trip timings are tight and not being able to start until 0930, would make it very difficult. There would be no change in the cost to Wiltshire Council if the time remained at 0900.

Tisbury Parish Council - Representing the approx 2500 residents of Tisbury.

I write on behalf of Tisbury PC to re-iterate a suggestion that has been made previously. The PC does not wish to pass comment on the specific proposals being considered with respect to timing - councillors have been asked to respond individually on this aspect. However, due to the lack of buses in the Tisbury area, but having the convenience of a rail station, councillors would like to suggest that residents have the choice of either a bus pass or a rail pass that would allow limited journeys to Salisbury and Gillingham, i.e. the 2 stations either side of Tisbury on the network. This is being suggested as there are so few buses to take advantage of travelling from Tisbury, but an hourly train service, even within the reduced timings being suggested by the consultation. Presumably this would affect Wiltshire residents in other areas too.

U3A WARMINSTER - Lifelong learning for 3rd agers. 500 people.

Early start needed for Hospital and Doctors appointments. Attendance for work.

Wiltshire Councillor Bill Douglas

For elderly who may have part time jobs or who have to get to a central hub, eg,

Salisbury to get a national bus connection if they are going on days out or visiting other parts of the country. For disabled the same reasons apply as for the elderly.

Wiltshire Council Hearing and Vision Team - We exist to enable people with a sensory impairment to be independent in their daily life; to ensure they can access the community within which they live; provide advocacy; provide information about specific services and concessions resulting from their sensory impairment; to raise awareness of the needs of people with a sensory impairment, to mention but a few. We represent views of all adults 18+ who have a sensory impairment - who can be defined as disabled, older people and in some cases both.

People with a registered disability should maintain the full use of the bus pass and there should not be a restriction on when it can be used. This is because people with disabilities are often isolated from society and are often not able to work. However, the concessionary pass means they can use a free service to attend medical appointments and other essential appointments. As they are often not working and potentially on means tested benefits is likely to mean there is limited "free" money and they could become isolated and stay at home which affects their emotional and psychological wellbeing as they cannot afford the bus fare to go out. I think such a measure is not the right one.

We ought to be considering looking at people with disabilities as being entitled to 'anytime' travel and instead look at people who are in receipt of Guaranteed Pension Credit as those being entitled to a bus pass - thereby removing all of those people who can afford to use public transport to pay for bus fares and not unduly penalise those who are disabled or on what is now Guaranteed Pension Credit.

Also we need to encourage people with disabilities out of their homes and participate in activities that people without disabilities can do much more easily. Is it right to limit when people with disabilities can travel?

Bus passes being an automatic entitlement is where the issue lies. As said earlier, there is a piece of work to look at who gets a concessionary pass to start with. If you look at those groups of people entitled to free prescriptions as one example, those people not in receipt of a means tested benefit are not entitled to a free prescription. The only drawback here is that even this system potentially discriminates against some people with disabilities i.e. Blind People. There should be closer links with the Department for Work and Pensions to look at those in receipt of benefits such as Guaranteed Pension credit.

Also, all bus passes are scanned - perhaps if the above has been introduced - it could also be possible to look at usage - if a person is not using the pass maybe it should be withdrawn or not be renewed - as there is a cost to this measure in itself.

Wiltshire Council Hearing and Vision Team - Supporting Deaf and hard of hearing people.

I believe that having limitations on when disabled people can use their free travel concession would impact negatively on this already under represented group. This directly links for me two main aspects; Firstly those who need to attend hospital appointments which they have no control of the time, would be disadvantaged by this change. Secondly those that are in work or complete voluntary work this would impact

on their take home pay and could negatively impact that they are no longer able to attend. Also for some disabled people travel by public transport is their only option, due to their disability and they shouldn't be penalised for this being the case. This is already a group of people who are marginalised and I strongly believe that by changing the times of bus travel this group would face further discrimination.