

Cabinet

Wednesday, 7 September 2016

Additional Information

Agenda Item No. 8 – Local Bus Services Strategy Review

Contact: Steve Jones (Telephone 01793 463602),
email: stevejones@swindon.gov.uk

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Local Bus Services and Strategy Review

Cabinet

Date: 7th September 2016

Author: Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport and the Head of Highways and Transport

Wards: All

Locality Affected: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the results of the public consultation on bus service revisions and reductions proposed in line with the proposed revised draft Local Bus Strategy. These changes are required to meet the Council's ongoing revenue budget pressures.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet's support for the revised bus strategy, and to authorise Officers to use this strategy to guide future Council funding of bus services.
- 1.3 To inform Cabinet of the two year extension of the Dial A Ride Contract provided by Swindon Dial A Ride.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 To note the results of the public consultation concerning proposed bus service revisions and reductions being proposed, in line with the proposed revised draft Local Bus Strategy as set out in Appendix 1, and its implications for local bus services as set out in Appendix 2, and the proposed service revision and its implications for Dial a Ride and Community Transport.
- 2.2 To adopt the revised Bus Strategy as summarised in the body of the report and set out in full at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 To authorise the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport, to implement bus service revisions as set out in Appendix 2, which includes consultation concerns to retain funding for some evening bus services as well as to implement the mitigation measures set out in the body of the report.
- 2.4 To note that the Council will continue to subsidise bus services through the use of the £176,000 Bus Service Operators Grant.
- 2.5 To note receipt of a petition about the withdrawal of evening bus services to Chiseldon signed by 648 residents.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Nigel Hale, Direct Dial 466211, nhale@swindon.gov.uk.

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- 2.6 To note that the Dial A Ride Contract provided by Swindon Dial A Ride has been extended for two years from 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2018 at a cost of £146k per annum.

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 The 2013 Local Bus Strategy has been reviewed in order to enable the Council to ensure that the Borough has in place a bus network that optimises the balance between the cost to the Council Tax payers and addressing passenger needs. This follows the approval of the Council's Budget for 2016/17.
- 3.2 In response to pressures on revenue funding, it was proposed to withdraw all revenue funding support for local bus services and to review the present dial a ride /community transport contract arrangements by 2020. The draft revised Local Bus Strategy attached in Appendix 1 reflects this decision and would enable its implementation to be made.

Public Consultation on Local Bus Services and Strategy Review (including Community Transport and Dial a Ride Services)

- 3.3 Before a revised strategy could be implemented, the Council undertook a public consultation. The public consultation commenced on the 18th July and ended on the 22nd August. This public consultation included the proposed service revision and review of Dial a Ride and Community Transport following the Council's decision to reduce the Community Transport budget of £312.4k by £100k in 2016-17 (£200k full year implication in 2017-18), in line with the revised draft Local Bus Strategy in Appendix 1.

Introduction and respondent profile

- 3.4 887 valid responses to the survey have been received and processed. 75% of responses are from users of the bus service, and around 70% say they are local residents or taxpayers. Just under one in five responses is from a member of the Dial A Ride service.
- 3.5 Demographic data indicate that there were respondents of all ages, but that response was more heavily concentrated in older age-groups. Nearly two in five respondents were of pensionable age, whilst one in five is aged under 35. Three in five respondents are female, two in five male. 33% are working full time and a further 14% in part-time work. 6% are students, and 40% are retired. Almost all respondents are white British. A total of 45% have a disability; the largest group among these are people with impaired mobility. Responses have come from all areas of Swindon but significant numbers of responses were received from Wroughton, Chiseldon and Highworth. 40% said they have access to a car.

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Patterns of use

- 3.6 75% of respondents use a bus service at least once a week and to travel to and from for work, and a similar proportion for health-related travel (though this tends to be less frequent and regular in nature). More than 80% of respondents use the service for shopping, and a similar proportion for leisure. 33% uses the bus service for education. Respondents therefore frequently use the bus for a number of different activities.
- 3.7 Regular service users are most heavily concentrated on weekday daytimes; 66% of respondents are regular users at these times. This falls to 40% who are regular evening travellers, or who use Saturday services every week, and 20% who travel regularly on Saturday evenings. Regular use of Sunday services is lower: just 20% are regular users of Sunday services during the day, and this halves to 10% on Sunday evenings.
- 3.8 80% of respondents live within easy walking distance of a bus stop. 33% have concessionary passes. Small proportions of respondents use the bus service with a buggy, mobility scooter, or bicycle.

Service principles and proposed changes

- 3.9 Asked about the financial principles set out in the draft revised strategy, there was a measure of agreement with these, though there are also many dissenting voices. The main area of concern is the need to ensure that those who are disadvantaged by their circumstances or their geography retain access to a service they may be more dependent on. There is also a view among some that it is reasonable for taxpayers to expect provision of an adequate bus service for all.
- 3.10 Similarly, there is a measure of agreement with the service principles articulated in the strategy, again with accompanying concerns. These include the desirability of prioritising travel for leisure (on the basis that it contributes to the economy of the Borough, as well as socially), and the changing nature of work, especially for young people on low pay, often with hours that last into the late evening. There is a call for priority to be given to the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities.
- 3.11 The thinking behind the hubs, and the BusLink provision, received a cautious welcome, but with question marks against sustainability and viability of these services, their capacity to provide for people at busy times or with mobility needs, and their impact on journey times. Several people query why no hub provision is being made for West Swindon, which they feel is being inequitably treated as a result. Others are unsure that their existing travel needs will be covered, and need more detail and precision. Questions are raised about the longer – term sustainability of the proposed Community Transport Organisation and its capacity

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to manage complex operations. Blunsdon Parish Council and Chiseldon Parish Council supported the bus link concept.

3.12 It should be noted that West Swindon has a higher proportion of commercial bus services so will be less affected by these changes.

3.13 Advised of the proposed changes to services, all proposals attract some comment. Respondents raise the most concern about changes to

3.13.1 Service 7: Town Centre to Highworth. Concerns are primarily over isolation of Highworth, and the effect on students, employees getting to and from work especially at South Marston, and young people's access to evening leisure.

3.13.2 Service 8: Freshbrook to Chiseldon. Problems travelling to and from work or hospital, isolation of residents of Chiseldon.

3.13.3 Service 9: Wroughton to Freshbrook. Although there are some impacts on residents of Freshbrook, the main concerns here focus on isolation of Wroughton, and the impact on students, employees getting home from work, and villagers' access to evening leisure.

3.13.4 Service 22: Swindon to Okus. Travel to and from work in the evening; night shift workers; loss of leisure, social and childcare access.

3.13.5 Service 71: Swindon to Thorney Park. The focus is on the impact on employees getting home from work, and Wroughton villagers' access to evening leisure.

3.13.6 Parish councils are opposed to reductions in services which they view as damaging to their communities. West Berkshire expressed interest in taking over two services.

3.13.7 A petition from Chiseldon Parish residents has been received in protest to the proposed cut by the Council of the evening bus services through Chiseldon (Service 70 and 70A). This petition has been acknowledged by the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport and will be taken note of as part of this report. The Council will explore with Chiseldon Parish Council the possibility of sharing the cost of funding of these services including the Service 72A journey as well.

3.14 Some proposed service changes, however, attract very little interest or concern, including

3.14.1 Service 65: Swindon to South Marston

3.14.2 Service 25: Swindon to Kingshill

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3.14.3 Service 21: Swindon to Penhill Valley

3.14.4 Service 47: Swindon to Lambourn

Dial A Ride service

- 3.15 25% say they use the Dial A Ride service. The largest proportion of these use the service once or twice a week, but about 25% of those using Dial A Ride use it less than once a month. The main purposes of using the service are for shopping, visiting friends and relatives. Dial A Ride users live all over Swindon but there are significant numbers living in Wroughton and Old Town.
- 3.16 There is considerable opposition to any changes in funding for the Swindon Dial A Ride. The service is especially important to those unable to walk to a bus stop, enabling them to carry out everyday activities such as shopping, keep hospital appointments etc., and is believed to play an important part in overcoming social isolation. BusLink type services are not seen as an alternative because of the need for a door to door service, for adapted buses, and for supportive drivers.
- 3.17 The contract provided by Swindon Dial A Ride will be extended for a further two years from 1st September 2016 to 31st August 2018. This will be at a cost of £146k per annum. The service will be an off peak service only operating Monday to Friday 0900 to 1630 and will meet the majority of user needs. At the same time the rural shopping day service provided by Swindon Dial A Ride will continue at its current contract price.
- 3.18 Dial a Ride are free to provide peak hour Monday to Friday services, and Saturday services to their users but these services will not be subsidised by the Council.
- 3.19 It has not been possible to maintain a peak time service within the reduced budget however only six passengers were likely to use peak time transport for purposes such as employment. A number of taxi type vehicles are operating which have access for passengers with disabilities and these can be an alternative for those who no longer use a Council subsidised peak time service available to them.
- 3.20 Further mitigation is proposed through setting up a workers concessionary scheme for people with disabilities to support Dial a Ride users who are in employment. This will be funded through the use of the available Bus Service Operators Grant, and not the revenue support budget.
- 3.21 The Dial A Ride service will remain an issue of concern while subsidised through the revenue budget. Several consultation responses indicated closure of Dial A Ride, but there should be no fear of this happening. A new two year contract extension has been agreed with Swindon Dial A Ride, and the new level of

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service from 1st September will be an off peak only Monday to Friday service (0900 – 1630).

- 3.22 The longer term sustainability of the service will be explored over the next two years. For example moving dial a ride from revenue support funding to other sources, assistance on capital funding and policy changes such as improving relationships with developers to access Section 106 funding. Other ideas will be considered such as integrating with education transport. Where it is beneficial to the service, early decisions will be made to reassure passengers that the dial a ride service will be available beyond 2018.
- 3.23 It is recommended that no further changes occur to the funding of Dial A Ride while discussions are ongoing with Swindon Dial A Ride to ensure the charity remains viable without further subsidy.

Other comments

- 3.24 Respondents are supportive of all the proposals to improve the bus service, but improved punctuality is by far the most important improvement that can be made. Better bus stops and interchanges, with better real time information, are also high priorities, though all measures are supported.
- 3.25 Other improvements called for by respondents include cleanliness, customer service and driver courtesy, punctuality and reliability - of information, as well as services. There are also those who ask for night buses, better quality vehicles, and improved space for buggies and wheelchairs. Several people question whether money allocated for improvements should be spent instead on maintaining existing services.
- 3.26 Invited to give their views on a pattern of service set out in the survey, respondents are broadly acquiescent, but several express disappointment at the proposed reductions in evening and Sunday services and services to specific communities, particularly in rural areas. Observations already made about the impact on shift or late-evening workers are restated, as are concerns about the viability of BusLink for people with disabilities.

Conclusion

- 3.27 Overall the proposed revisions to the Local Bus Strategy are supported although there is concern about some evening services and their importance to shift workers and younger people being able to travel in the evening. A number of daytime services received little support and it may be advisable to withdraw these and not replace with any alternative hub type service, if support to some evening services is to be maintained.

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Draft Revised Bus Strategy - Key Points

- 3.28 The full revised draft strategy is included at Appendix 1 and its key points are summarised below. While the responses to the consultation are noted, it is not proposed that the draft principles be amended.
- 3.28.1 Council will work with the main commercial bus operators to support the bus charter principles as set out in the Local Bus Strategy.
- 3.28.2 A Bus Network Partnership Board will act as an advisory group to the Cabinet Member on bus issues.
- 3.28.3 The Bus Network Partnership Board will act as a liaison between commercial bus operators and the Council in the development of bus services, bus priorities and highway improvements to support a commercial bus operation.
- 3.28.4 Commercial operators will define the bus network as 95% of current local bus operation is commercial.
- 3.28.5 The Council will suggest commercial proposals where the need arises for consideration by commercial operators.
- 3.28.6 The Council will work with local organisations including parish/town councils to develop where there is a need, a supporting network of BusLink services using a number of transport hub centres to enable passengers to connect with commercial bus services.
- 3.28.7 Initially three transport hubs will be identified in North Swindon (Orbital Retail Park), East Swindon (GW Hospital) and South Swindon (Old Town). These will be developed if there is sufficient demand for them and initially by working with the main bus operator in the area served.
- 3.28.8 The Council will develop and create a Community Transport Organisation if necessary to deliver sustainable transport solutions and BusLink connecting services to the transport hubs. BusLink connecting services are likely to use conventional buses operated by the commercial bus operators to either link to their main service or be an extension of a commercial bus service.
- 3.28.9 A bus improvement plan for the highway will be established every year.
- 3.29 The draft revised strategy includes a commitment to working with the bus operators to improve the highway network to help deliver bus punctuality and the introduction of a Bus Punctuality Partnership.
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- 3.30 In order to meet the service needs and underlying budget demands, it is recommended that Cabinet approved the revised draft bus strategy so that officers may use it as the basis of future proposals.

Mitigation measures

- 3.31 In response to other issues raised during the consultation, Cabinet is asked to consider authorising the Head of Highways and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways and Transport to implement the following measures.
- 3.31.1 The Council will set up if required a Community Transport Organisation to deliver sustainable transport solutions, which will run BusLink hub-based services that connect into the commercial network.
- 3.31.2 SBC will support the setup of BusLink hub services with transitional funding.
- 3.31.3 Transitional funding within existing budgets such as Bus Service Operators Grant will also be available from SBC to pump-prime services to become commercially viable, and will support the development of new funding streams where these might be available and required.
- 3.31.4 SBC will work with the Community Transport Organisation to help ensure the continuation of local services where commercially viable or the Community Transport Organisation wishes to continue with service support and provision.
- 3.31.5 The Council will continue to work with the Community Transport Organisation to secure Section 106 and any additional funding will be used to extend bus services, and contribute to BusLink hub services.
- 3.31.6 Where a bus route is subsidised by less than £1 per passenger per trip, the Council will expect bus operators to take all necessary measures to achieve a commercial approach so there is no ongoing subsidy.
- 3.31.7 The Council will use only the £176,000 Bus Services Operators Grant to subsidise future bus services.

Review and Rationale

- 3.32 Where BusLink hub services fail to become commercially viable during any transitional support period, the Council will review the operation of the services with the Community Transport Organisation if it is introduced. Where this has resulted from the lack of patronage of the service and there is no strong community desire to cover the shortfall, a decision will be taken to remove the BusLink type hub service at the next contract break.

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4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Unless replaced, the existing bus strategy and criteria will remain the adopted policy of the Council and so the strategy needs to be revised in order to meet financial pressures and the budgetary framework agreed by Council.
- 4.2 A “do nothing” approach would commit the Council to continue to fund services with limited patronage and no commercial viability. The absence of a Community Transport Organisation would allow no alternative means of local community involvement and funding where communities would otherwise be willing to step in and support the service.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The proposals contained in this report will contribute to the challenging £20m general fund budget pressure faced by the Council for 2017/18. A 2 year extension to the Dial A Ride contract of £146,000 per annum has been agreed with effect from 1st September, 2016.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention Rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No other relevant implications have been identified in the preparation of this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been completed. No adverse or other significant impacts were found at this stage. Copies of the assessment can be obtained from the report author.

Risk Management

- 5.5 A risk assessment has been undertaken as part of the Highways and Transport Business Plan.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Corporate Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

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7. Background Papers

7.1 None

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 Draft revised Local Bus Strategy 2016

8.2 Appendix 2 Public Transport Contracts 2016/17

8.3 Appendix 3 Copy of Public Consultation document

9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for September 2016.

Appendix 1

Local Bus Strategy for

Swindon – May 2016

(DRAFT)



Local Bus Strategy for Swindon – May 2016 (DRAFT)



Introduction

The Council's local bus strategy was revised in 2013 in response to budget pressures and the need to have a clear defined strategy to enable the Council to decide which bus services it wished to support and why. The current economic situation since the last revision in 2013, means that it is vitally important that every single piece of Council expenditure represents value for money and supports the achievement of agreed strategic priorities. Therefore, faced with an economic situation that has seen available funding reduce it is necessary to further reassess our approach to securing a local bus network that best responds to the needs of the community and makes a valuable contribution to the future growth of the local economy.

In order to secure this desired outcome, as part of an updated local bus strategy other types of community transport and dial a ride type services will continue to be part of any revision. This will allow the Council to make best use of the full range of transport services in meeting individual passenger needs. This approach recognises that procuring transport contracts through the conventional bus operators may not always be the most ideal solution.

Section 89 of the 1985 Transport Act gave local authorities responsible for passenger transport the power to procure bus services, which they wish to provide to supplement the commercial bus network. The bus services provided by a local authority are described as those that are considered socially necessary but not commercially viable. Services cannot be provided if they compete against a commercial bus service, as local authorities cannot inhibit commercial bus service operations.

Once the commercial bus services have been identified and registered with the Traffic Commissioner, local authorities are faced with securing those bus services or individual journeys that are not commercial. These are selected on their social necessity.

The vast majority of bus services in Swindon are provided by the local bus operators without the need for any financial support from the Council. Currently this equates to 95% of the local bus network within Swindon Borough.

However, there are certain areas and times when the low level of passenger demand means that a bus service would require financial support in order for

it to operate. In such circumstances, the Council would normally secure these services through a competitive tender process with local bus operators. Where it is more cost effective to make amendments to a commercial service a de minimis arrangement can be put in place instead of tendering. Due to the size of the commercial bus market in the Borough, 'de minimis' agreements with the main commercial operator of a particular bus service is going to be a regular cost effective solution to meeting supported bus service requirements.

The Council remains committed to achieving a fully commercial bus network which is reinforced by its ownership and investment in Thamesdown Transport. However the current financial situation for the next few years has meant the Council is not able to remain committed to revenue supported budgets. This means that the Council will have to consider how best to utilise any remaining funding and alternative means of providing services where there is still a social need for them or they may have to cease altogether. In some examples this will mean bus services may become commercial following investment in them by the Council's revenue funding over the last few years or they will be withdrawn due to a lack of viability.



Background Information

Funding

Bus services can receive funding through -

Council Revenue Funding from general local authority budgets.

Unfortunately the Council cannot maintain revenue supported budgets for bus services in future and so there will be no funding in this area. The Local Bus Strategy therefore needs to be revised to reflect this decision.

Bus Service Operators Grant

Bus operators have historically received funding from Central Government in the form of Bus Service Operators' Grant as a rebate of fuel duty paid on fuel used in the provision of local bus services. The Department for Transport, implementing a decision made by the previous Coalition Government has, from January 2014, devolved an amount equivalent to the Bus Service Operators' Grant to Local Transport Authorities. This is to allow decisions to

be taken locally on how this funding should be spent on bus services that are wholly tendered by the Council.

Swindon Borough Council received funding of £176,205 for the 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 Financial Years and will also receive it for at least a further two years making five years in total. This amount is fixed and will not be adjusted in future years to reflect changes in service patterns or inflation.

Commercial bus services, which in Swindon cover the majority of bus services i.e. those which do not require any funding support or those that operate partly commercial as they require some funding for certain times of the day, will continue to have the Bus Service Operators' Grant paid directly to them by the Department of Transport.

Section 106 funding provided by developers. This is to ensure that any new residential or industrial development is sustainable with public transport. Funding in practice tends to be for five years on the basis that after this period of funding the bus service should be commercially viable. If not, then the service will be withdrawn or the Council may give consideration to providing financial support similar to other Council public transport contracts funded from revenue support.

Dial a Ride Service (Revenue Support)-

The Council also provides annual funding from the revenue support budget to provide a contract (subject to tendering) to provide demand responsive community transport services for those unable to use conventional buses currently consisting of a dial a ride operation. The dial a ride service is designed to be as similar as possible to a conventional bus service, but to reflect the special requirements of its users in its operation and in the facilities provided on the vehicle. The service is designed for driver-only operation, where operators have disability awareness and provide a high standard of customer care, including manual handling assistance.

Other funding

There may be opportunities to secure additional funding from central government such as Better Bus Area Funds. This is why it is important to have a clear strategy in place and bus service improvements/proposals agreed so the Council can take advantage of any new funding initiative should it become available.



The Revised Bus Strategy

The Borough has a high level of commercial bus services (95% currently) and has placed the emphasis on helping operators reach a position where all bus services are commercial by 2020. However, it is appreciated that in meeting the needs of passengers requiring a socially necessary service this will take time to attain.

The revenue support budget funding which currently supports a number of local bus services and which underpinned the Local Bus Strategy revised in 2013 will no longer be available. The removal of revenue support funding is an impact which has meant that the current Local Bus Strategy now needs to be revised further to reflect this impact on funding of local bus services. This proposed revision in 2016 will determine whether local bus services will continue and if they do, how they will be funded following the withdrawal of funding for the revenue support budget. Therefore these revisions for 2016 determine the level of bus service provision from November 2016 onwards.

The limited amount of funding available means that the revised Local Bus Strategy will focus on providing bus services in areas that are rural or have a high level of social need. This will replace the 2013 principles which placed the focus on funding support for evening and Sunday bus service provision. In creating a sustainable bus network for the Borough, a bus charter will be developed setting out the following principles which will be applied, and the main commercial bus operators will be encouraged to support the Bus Charter on a partnership basis.

Principles

- Council will work with the main commercial bus operators to support the bus charter principles.
- The Council will following the withdrawal of revenue support funding for bus services explore alternative solutions for those areas of social need or rural areas.
- The funding priority will no longer be given to evening and Sunday bus services as the focus will now be on rural areas or areas of social need.
- The Bus Network Partnership Board acts as an advisory group to the Cabinet member on bus issues.
- The Bus Network Partnership Board will act as a liaison between commercial bus operators and the Council in the development of bus services, bus priorities and highway improvements to support a commercial bus operation.
- Commercial operators will define the bus network.
- The Council will suggest commercial proposals where the need arises for consideration by commercial operators.
- The Council will work with local organisations including parish/town councils to develop a supporting network of BusLink services using a

number of transport hub centres to enable passengers to connect with commercial bus services. Initially three transport hubs will be identified in North Swindon (Orbital Retail Park), East Swindon (GW Hospital) and South Swindon (Old Town).

- The Council will develop and create if required a Community Transport Organisation to deliver sustainable transport solutions and BusLink connecting services to the transport hubs.
- A bus improvement plan for the highway will be established every year and will include:
 - A focus on areas of delay
 - Provision of improved passenger facilities at bus stops and interchanges
 - Working with operators and planners to secure sustainable public transport provision to new developments through consideration in the transport assessment required as part of the planning process, of the location and design of new developments
 - To agree a Punctuality Partnership with bus operators which will enable the creation of conditions for punctual and reliable operation, including consideration where appropriate and affordable of bus priority and traffic management measures, network management and management of street works and road closures.
 - More bus lanes and bus priority measures
 - Better enforcement of bus priority measures
 - Enable delivery of a modern town centre bus station
 - Improve real time passenger information systems
 - Develop joint bids to central government for funding for bus infrastructure improvements

Managing Expectations

As part of the Bus Charter , the commercial bus network will be expected to provide –

- A frequent daytime service to the town centre, Monday to Saturday from all the main urban areas of Swindon. This will include a service from each main area to the town centre arriving by 8am and another leaving after 5.30pm to allow access to employment, education and training facilities either in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon. Regular daytime services between 9am and 5pm (half hourly) will allow access to a range of services and facilities in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon.
- A frequent daytime service to Swindon town centre Monday to Saturday from all the main settlements outside the urban area i.e. Highworth and Wroughton. This will include a service from each main area to the town centre arriving by 8am and another leaving after 5.30pm to allow access to employment, education and training facilities either in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon. Regular daytime services between 9am and 5pm

(half hourly) will allow access to a range of services and facilities in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon.

- A frequent daytime service to Swindon town centre Monday to Saturday from nearby towns and cities in adjoining areas.
- The commercial bus network will be supplemented where there is recognised demand by the provision of evening bus services in the urban area at least hourly from 1900 to 2300. This will only be possible following the withdrawal of revenue support funding for local bus services if the bus service is commercially viable. If there is a social need for them this will only be funded from Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), Section 106 where applicable or parish/town councils.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

- The commercial bus network will be supplemented by the provision of Sunday bus services in the urban area between 0800 and 1800 on a half hourly basis. The Borough Council will work with commercial bus operators to create a Sunday bus network which mirrors the Monday to Saturday operation where there is recognised demand even if it is a reduced frequency in comparison. This will only be possible following the withdrawal of revenue support funding for local bus services if the bus service is commercially viable. If there is a social need for them this will only be funded from Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), Section 106 where applicable or parish/town councils.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

- The Council will work and co-ordinate with commercial bus operators and parish/town councils where there is perceived demand to produce cost effective solutions for socially necessary elements of bus services in non-commercial urban areas and rural areas. Where these are justified they will be subject to tender if appropriate and vehicle size will vary to meet the individual needs of each area.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

Where necessary a community link bus service will be provided (branded 'BusLink'). Alternatively this type of service will be provided by working with the appropriate commercial bus operator to provide a connecting BusLink service to its main service or be an extension of a commercial bus service.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

- The community link bus service (BusLink or Linkabus) will be a vehicle (capacity 4 – 16 seats dependent upon demand) which collects passengers from previously non - commercial bus routes and delivers them to the nearest regular bus service at a convenient Hub, making use of interavailability of bus tickets where possible. It will provide this service to ensure passengers can travel to work, for their education or hospital depending upon current demand and need.

Rural bus services will be replaced by a BusLink/Linkabus service initially funded by the Council before transferring the funding responsibility to a town/parish council. Rural bus services will be revised to meet this requirement and the focus will be on maintaining a link with Swindon in order for passengers to travel to work, for their education or visit the hospital. Alternatively this type of service will be provided by working with the appropriate commercial bus operator to provide a connecting BusLink service to its main service or be an extension of a commercial bus service.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

- The Council will continue, where cost effective to do so, to use public bus services to carry pupils and students entitled to free or assisted school and college transport.



Dial a ride and community transport will be revised to take account of the revised bus strategy.

- Any new residential development will need to provide a contribution towards community transport operation through Section 106 funding.
- The Council will act as a co-ordinator to assist community groups in meeting their transport needs. This will include holding a transport forum of local groups/organisations such as the RVS.



Section 106 developer funding

The Council will continue to request S106 contributions from developers of new residential and commercial developments to support bus services in the early years of the development. The key objective will be to promote and support a bus service that will eventually be commercially viable. This enables the mitigation of some of the adverse effects of new development on the existing network. In current economic circumstances developers are unable to make the general level of contributions that were sustainable in the past while retaining the viability of their development. In order to maintain an adequate level of bus service it may be necessary to place greater priority on bus service contributions than those for other public facilities.

In the past some developments have been provided with “stand alone” services. These are unlikely to become commercially viable, even in the long term, except in the very largest developments. In future, services will be expected to be provided through alterations or extensions to existing services. This will strengthen these services and give the new development the best chance of retaining a commercially operated route when S106 funding expires.

S106 funded bus services should be enhancements to, or developments of, existing commercial routes so that the risk of failure can be mitigated.

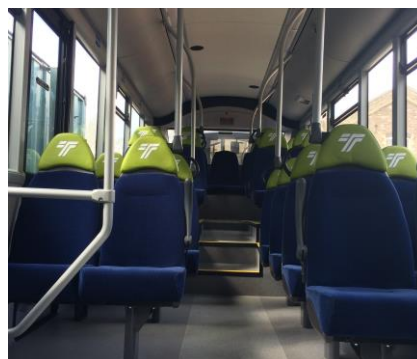
- The whole route, including S106 improvements, can then be promoted through marketing and publicity.
- The potential for operating efficiencies – and lower costs- can be optimised if the S106 routes are not standalone.

The Council may support bus operators after 5 years only if the Council and the bus operator feel it can achieve commerciality at a reasonable point beyond the funding expiry date. The Council will not support the ongoing subsidy of individual s106 provided bus service routes.

S106 route tender specifications should be reasonably flexible to allow operators to put forward compliant bids built around their commercial services.

The effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Bus Network Partnership Board.

The Council will need to consider the number of people who are elderly or have mobility needs that are going to live in new developments and allow for funding to be bid for community transport facilities as well as conventional bus services. Therefore as discussed earlier community transport type services will be included within the bus service provision secured by S106 contributions. This will ensure that all parts of the community have access to transport services.



Linking the Bus Strategy to Corporate Strategy

The bus strategy to continue moving forward must take account of any current or emerging corporate strategy.

The strategy will now link itself to the Vision for Swindon.

By 2030, Swindon will have all of the positive characteristics of a British city with one of the UK's most successful economies; a low-carbon environment with compelling cultural, retail and leisure opportunities and excellent infrastructure. It will be a model of well managed housing growth that supports and improves new and existing communities. Swindon will be physically transformed with existing heritage and landmarks complemented by new ones that people who live, work and visit here would recognise and admire. It will remain, at heart, a place of fairness and opportunity where people can aspire to and achieve prosperity, supported by strong civic and community leadership.

Priority One – Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing , low-carbon economy.

We have chosen to link the bus strategy to Priority One Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy.

In particular the Strategy will contribute to the following Pledges -

Pledge 7

Build new affordable homes including 200 new council homes and 66 units through the Affordable Housing Development programme at sites including the Hawthorns, the Royal British Legion site in Penhill, Townsend House in Old Town and the former refuge in Park South.

Pledge 8

Complete the redevelopment of Sussex Square.

Pledge 10

As part of the town's regeneration:

Re-develop the former Aspen House site/Granville Street area, to extend on the successful Regent Circus development.

Make Havelock Square an attractive, safe open space to complement local shops.

Pledge 11

Replace the current bus station with a new and modern facility.

Pledge 13

Improve highway linkages to the Eastern Villages, particularly around the White Hart roundabout.

Pledge 14

With Barratt Homes we will build up to 3,500 homes in Wichelstowe including the development of a district centre.

The bus strategy will help achieve this pledge by :

Ensuring that each main area of Swindon has a commercial bus service that allows residents without a car to access a wide range of employment, education and training opportunities across the Borough.

It is important for a successful transport network to have a central interchange in the town to enable passengers to make swift connections between fast and frequent bus services in a safe, secure and friendly environment. The concessionary travel scheme funded bus passenger is a key factor for the town centre economy as we have younger, fitter plus 60 generation with more disposable income than previous generations of a similar age. It is therefore important to encourage this income to be spent in Swindon and support local businesses.

What this will mean:

- This will mean a Monday to Friday bus service from each main area of Swindon to the town centre arriving by 8am and another leaving after 5.30pm to allow access to employment, shopping and leisure facilities either in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon.
- This will mean that evening and Sunday services only where funding is available will provide a supporting priority to the core commercial network to ensure facilities are in place to enable people to travel to and from work outside traditional work patterns e.g nine to five.

- This will mean that services in rural or social need areas for leisure or recreation purposes or during the middle of the day for shopping or visiting friends or relatives will need to be part of this priority.
- The community link bus service (possibly branded BusLink) would be introduced to meet social needs and demand where a conventional bus service is not a viable solution. As part of this process the Council will work with town/parish councils and/or local groups/organisations to seek a suitable solution.

Priority Two - Offer education opportunities that lead to the right skills and right jobs, in the right places.

Pledge 16

Improve the reputation and image of Swindon to attract inward investment.

We have chosen to link the bus strategy to this priority around providing access to employment, education and training because:

- To maintain Swindon's economic prosperity we must develop and retain existing businesses whilst attracting new ones. We can help by freeing up the local labour market so that business has access to a good pool of local staff which is not hindered by lack of adequate public transport.
- In terms of skills & qualifications, Swindon's performance at GCSE and Levels 2-4 is below average and the gap widens at higher qualification levels. This is reflected in residents' salary levels being lower than commuters into Swindon. We need to ensure that young people are able to access education and training opportunities without facing difficulties due to lack of adequate public transport.
- Swindon's rate of economic inactivity is above average and yet many do want to work. The number of our young people not in work is higher than average. We need to ensure that young people are able to access employment opportunities without facing difficulties due to lack of adequate public transport.

The bus strategy will help achieve this priority by:

- Ensuring that each main area of Swindon has a commercial bus service that allows residents without a car to access a wide range of employment, education and training opportunities across the Borough.

What this will mean:

- This will mean a Monday to Friday bus service from each main area of Swindon to the town centre arriving by 8am and another leaving after 5.30pm to allow access to employment, education and training facilities either in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon.
- This will mean that evening and Sunday services only where funding is available will provide a supporting priority to the core commercial network to

ensure facilities are in place to enable people to travel to and from work outside traditional work patterns e.g nine to five.

-
- The community link bus service (possibly branded BusLink) would be introduced to meet social needs and demand in rural areas where a conventional bus service is not a viable solution and provide a transport link to a transport hub to make a connection with commercial bus services. As part of this process the Council will work with town/parish councils and/or local groups/organisations to seek a suitable solution.

Priority Four - Help people to help themselves while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults.

Pledge 25

Deliver a borough – wide approach to increase the impact of volunteering, enabling more people to be active citizens in their communities.

Pledge 27

Ensure that more people and their carers are supported to live as independently as possible and reduce the length of time people need to spend in residential care.

We have chosen to link the bus strategy to this priority around providing access to services and facilities to enable people to live independent lives because:

- Spend is skewed to the provision of high cost specialist services rather than preventing future problems arising.
- Demand for all care services continues to rise, with large and unsustainable rises expected in the long term.
- We must identify and take opportunities to reduce spend through early intervention.
- We must promote independence as people want to be in control of their own lives and our way of working needs to support people so they can support themselves.

The bus strategy will help achieve this priority by:

- Ensuring that each main area of Swindon has a bus service (a social safety net service) that allows residents without a car to access the wide range of services and facilities that allow them to live independent lives, in their own homes, while reducing demand on other public services.
- Allowing individuals to access services and facilities in order to support them in improving their own well-being.
-

What this will mean:

- This will mean an off peak Monday to Friday bus service from each main area of Swindon to the town centre to allow access to services and facilities in the town centre or by changing onto connecting buses to other parts of Swindon.
- This will mean that evening and Sunday bus services will provide a supporting priority only where funding is available to the core commercial network to ensure facilities are in place to enable people to travel to and from them and maintain their independence.
-
- This will mean provision of the BusLink branded community transport bus service in some areas rather than conventional bus services.
- Delivering bus services in the most cost effective way that meet the needs of users so that, for example, by using the community link bus service (possibly branded BusLink) would be introduced to meet social needs and demand in rural areas where a conventional bus service is not a viable solution and provide a transport link to a transport hub to make a connection with commercial bus services. As part of this process the Council will work with town/parish councils and/or local groups/organisations to seek a suitable solution.
 - Provide a community bus service, for example that is tailored to meet the needs of individuals who are unable due to health reasons to access conventional local bus services.

The Bus Network Partnership Board will at its formation be clear on the requirements of the local bus strategy and will work with and review them each year.

Prioritisation

The withdrawal of revenue support funding may mean that further prioritisation is required within these principles.

Priority will be given to locations that would otherwise be isolated from alternative bus services i.e. there would be no alternative service within practical walking distance. This would be primarily the rural areas and rural communities. Walking to another location that has a bus service or completing a journey on foot or bike is more realistic within the urban areas of Swindon. Levels of use may however be less in rural areas so value for money will need to be considered along with alternative forms of transport assistance.

Where demand exceeds available funding levels it may not be possible to address both priority areas equally. priority will be given to maintaining a safety net for the vulnerable to allow them to access goods and services to maintain independence in their own homes above the desire to maintaining access to employment, education and training for those of working age.

The new Bus Network Partnership Board will act as a framework that allows decisions to be made in a forum where the full consequences of decisions are known and annual reviews can be undertaken on a regular basis.

Balancing Needs

In times of less conducive economic conditions affecting the public finance, there will be an inevitable tension between demands for service provision and availability of funding. There will also be tension between the requests for services by people in different parts of Swindon and the overall availability of funding. A “balanced” approach will therefore be taken in order to ensure that resources, and therefore service provision, are shared equally across the Borough so that one area does not receive a higher level of service support than another (after taking into account a test of “value for money”).

Application of guidelines

- Subsidy per passenger trip will be calculated for all services (or estimated for new service/contract until actual data is available).
- Services will be ranked according to subsidy per passenger trip.
- Services above the maximum subsidy per passenger guideline will be reviewed (£4.00 per passenger) and either revised or withdrawn unless there are reasons for continuing support, or alternative lower cost provision can be identified (within the available budget). At all times any decision will be mindful of the economic priorities.
- Services that have the highest subsidy per passenger will be subject to review if funding is under pressure (particularly if a need arises to consider provision of services in other areas).
- If necessary because of budget pressures, the overall network of supported services will be reviewed in order to maintain the widest coverage of provision as possible and alternative service provision will be discussed with parish/town councils.
- Final decisions about which services to reduce or withdraw will be taken by Members, following consultation, balancing the priority of the needs in each category and the impacts of withdrawal against the availability of funding.



Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1640	6	Mon - Sat (evenings), Sundays	evening service (hrly), Sunday journeys	Stagecoach S & D	14695	1.83
	Manchester Road, County Road, Cricklade Road, Headlands Grove, Greenlands Road, Green Road, Meadowcroft, Beechcroft Road, Hyde Road, Ridgeway Road and Hathaway Road to KINGSDOWN		Stratton St Margaret		Withdraw 2016/17 Sunday supported journeys approx. November 2016 or April 2017	
D1641	7	Mon - Sat	evening service (hrly)	Stagecoach S & D	46290	0.34
	Manchester Road, County Road, Ocotal Way, Shrivenham Road, Stratton Road, Swindon Road, Grange Drive, Ermin Street, Highworth Road, Stirling Road, Highworth Road, Swindon Road, Swindon Street, Lechlade Road, St. Michael's Avenue, Grove Hill, Lechlade Road and Roundhills Mead to HIGHWORTH		Stratton St Margaret, Highworth		Retain evening service.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1642	8	Mon - Sat	evening	Stagecoach S	23327	0.81
	Fleming Way, Holbrook Way, Faringdon Road, Emlyn Square, Bristol Street, Church Place, Rodbourne Road, Penzance Drive, Wootton Bassett Road, Tewkesbury Way, Bodiam Drive North, Dunwich Drive, Flint Hill, Idovers Drive, Stokesay Drive, Pevensey Way, Ashington Way, Corton Crescent, Link Avenue, Whitehill Way, Gainsborough Way, Rowton Heath Way, Worsley Road, Liskeard Way and Gainsborough Way to FRESHBROOK				Withdraw 2016/17 approx. November 2016 or April 2017	
D1645	9	Mon - Sat	evening service (hrly)	Stagecoach S & D	14211	1.27
	WROUGHTON via Kellsborough Avenue, Maunsell Way, Wharf Road, Wroughton High Street, Devizes Road, Moormead Road, Swindon Road, Croft Road, Devizes Road, Victoria Road, Regent Circus, Princes Street, Fleming Way.		Wroughton		Retain evening service	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1638	11A / 19	Sun	Sunday (hrly)	Stagecoach S & D	34544	0.30
	Service 11A - FLEMING WAY - PINEHURST - HAYDON WICK - ST ANDREW'S RIDGE via Greenmeadow		Haydon Wick / Blunsdon (St Andrews Ridge)		Withdraw service January 2017	
D1638	12	Mon - Sat	am & pm to Blunsdon	Thamesdown Transport	23662	0.97
	BLUNSDON via High Street, Ermin Street, Lady Lane, Salzgitter Drive, Thamesdown Drive, Elstree Way, Shepperton Way, Elstree Way, Ealing Way, ASDA Walmart.		Blunsdon		Retain service or review with Thamesdown Transport as part of BusLink hub service.	
D1644 / D1638	71	Mon - Sat		Stagecoach S & D	51292	2.04
0840 Bus station via Croft Campus to Burderop Farm, Hodson Road, New Road, May's Lane and Station Road to CHISELDON	SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Devizes Road, Croft Road, Swindon Road, Perry's Lane, Inverary Road, Dunbar Road, Boness Road, Beaufort Road, Kerrs Way, Wharf Road, Wroughton (High Street), Devizes Road, Marlborough Road, Brimble Hill, Burderop Farm, Thorney Park		Wroughton / Chiseldon		Service to be reviewed with Stagecoach as BusLink type service and to run via Wichelstowe with part funding through Section 106.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1652 / D1657	15	Mon - Fri & Sat, Eve & Sun	whole service	Thamesdown	769597	0.10
	Pipers Way extension of service to Wichelstowe terminating at Waitrose operating via East Wichel Way and Foxham Way to MIDDLE WICHEL.		Haydon Wick (commercial service), funding S106 Wichelstowe		No change runs until Section 106 funding runs out.	
D1646	19	Mon - Sat	evening service	Thamesdown	12404	2.06
	FLEMING WAY via Holbrook Way, Faringdon Road, Emlyn Square, Bristol Street, Church Place, Rodbourne Road, Penzance Drive, Paddington Drive, Mead Way, Whitehill Way, Link Avenue, Whitehill Way, Eastleaze Road, Chelmsford Road, Shaw Road, Cartwright Drive, Sandacre Road, Swinley Drive and Purton Road to SPARCELLS				Withdraw service January 2017.	
D1647	21, 23, 25	Mon - Sat	whole service	Thamesdown	46332	0.54
	Service 25: FLEMING WAY via Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Bath Road, Kingshill Road and Wootton Bassett Road to MANNINGTON					

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1638	25	Mon - Sat		Thamesdown	3599	2.28
Additional journey to Kingshill	Service 25: FLEMING WAY via Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Bath Road, Kingshill Road and Wootton Bassett Road to MANNINGTON				Retain service or review with Thamesdown Transport as part of BusLink hub service.	
D1638	51	Mon - Sat	2 journeys (am) from Blunsdon	Stagecoach S&D	299	12.54
0628 & 0728 Blunsdon (Holdcroft Close)	CIRENCESTER via Siddington, South Cerney, Latton, Cricklade, Ermin Street, Cricklade Road, County Road and Manchester Road to SWINDON. Please note funding is provided for Blunsdon section of route only.		Blunsdon		Withdraw 2016/17 approx. November 2016 or April 2017	
D1638	Bishopstone / Wanborough	Mon, Tue & Fri	Shopper bus - start date tbc	Swindon Dial a Ride	No Data Available	No Data Available
					This request would not be introduced.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1648 / D1651 / D1638	22	Mon - Sat	evening service/S1 06 Monday to Sunday	Thamesdown	11294	7.93
	BARNFIELD via Barnfield Road, Great Western Way, Paddington Drive, Penzance Drive, Rodbourne Road, Church Place, Bristol Street, Emlyn Square, London Street, Sheppard Street, Station Road, Rail Station, Wellington Street, Milford Street, Fleming Way, Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Devizes Road, Springfield Road, Westlecot Road, Goddard Avenue and Okus Road to OKUS. NB evening service funded from Okus to Fleming Way.				Withdraw evening service 22 approx. January 2017. Withdraw town centre to B&Q Section 106 funded service following end of Section 106 this year.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1649	24	Mon - Sat	whole service	Thamesdown	36177	0.53
	BUS STATION via Manchester Road, County Road, Cirencester Way, Cricklade Road, Whitworth Road, Thames Avenue, Westfield Way, Ealing Way, Elstree Way, Shepperton Way, Elstree Way, Thamesdown Drive, Thresher Drive, Thamesdown Drive, Cricklade Road, Highworth Road, Sams Lane and High Street to BLUNSDON		Haydon Wick, Blunsdon		Review with Thamesdown Transport as part of BusLink hub service.	
D1660	South Marston Bus Service	Mon, Wed & Fri	whole service	Swindon Dial a Ride	No Data Available	
1030 from South Marston & 1330 return from Swindon Town Centre	South Marston to Sainsbury's at Stratton and Swindon Town Centre		South Marston		Withdraw service October 2016.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
Cross Boundary	46, 48, 70A, 72A			Thamesdown	No Data Available	
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 70A SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Devizes Road, Newport Street, Marlborough Road, Great Western Hospital, Common Head, Marlborough Road, Station Road, May's Lane, New Road, Draycot Road, Draycot Foliat, Ogbourne St George, Southend, Ogbourne St Andrew, Port Hill, Swindon Road, Herd Street, Barn Street and New Road to MARLBOROUGH		Chiseldon		Discuss with Chiseldon Parish Council to joint fund towards Wiltshire Council Contract for Evening Service 70A and 72A as an alternative to withdrawing financial support from January 2017 which may lead to Wiltshire Council withdrawing the services.	

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served	Parish / Town Councils		Review Action		
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 72A SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Princes Street, Clarence Street, Victoria Road, Devizes Road, Croft Road, Swindon Road, Perry's Lane, Wharf Road, Kellsboro Avenue, Maunsell Way, Wharf Road, High Street, Devizes Road, Marlborough Road, Brimble Hill, Thorney Park, Hodson Road, Draycot Road, Draycot Foliat, Ogbourne St George, Southend, Ogbourne St Andrew, Port Hill, Swindon Road, Herd Street, Barn Street and New Road to MARLBOROUGH	Wroughton , Chiseldon				
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 46 SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Queens Drive, Marlborough Road, Great Western Hospital, Liddington, Foxhill, Baydon, Aldbourne, Ramsbury and Chilton Foliat to HUNGERFORD	Liddington		Retain service and continue funding towards Wiltshire Council contract.		

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 48 SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Queens Drive, Marlborough Road, Great Western Hospital, Liddington, Foxhill, Baydon, Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Axford and Mildenhall to MARLBOROUGH		Liddington		Retain service and continue funding towards Wiltshire Council contract.	
Cross Boundary	46A, 48A		Thamesdown Transport		No Data Available	
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 46A SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Queens Drive, Marlborough Road, Great Western Hospital, Pack Hill, The Marsh, Burycroft, Wanborough (High Street), Kite Hill, Liddington, Foxhill, Baydon, Aldbourne, Ramsbury and Chilton Foliat to HUNGERFORD		Wanborough, Liddington		Retain service and continue funding towards Wiltshire Council contract.	
Contribution to Wiltshire Council	Service 48A SWINDON via Milford Street, Fleming Way, Queens Drive, Marlborough Road, Great Western Hospital, Pack Hill, The Marsh, Burycroft, Wanborough (High Street), Kite Hill, Liddington, Foxhill, Baydon, Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Axford and Mildenhall to MARLBOROUGH		Wanborough, Liddington			

Contract No	Route	Days	Journeys	Contractor	Total Passengers Carried 2015-16	Cost per passenger 2015-16 (£)
Notes	Area Served		Parish / Town Councils		Review Action	
D1639	47	Mon - Sat		GoRide CIC	No Data Available	
	SWINDON - Wanborough, Bishopstone, Ashbury, Lambourn.		Wanborough, Bishopstone		Retain and keep funding West Berkshire Council service.	
Other Issues						
Bishopstone, Wanborough to Stratton Sainsbury's	Mon - Fri	one return journey	Swindon Dial a Ride			
	Bishopstone, Wanborough		Bishopstone, Wanborough		Do not introduce service.	
	Swindon bus map				Retain proposal but will need to be funded	
Electronic timetable information or maintenance of real time information					Do not proceed as no funding available.	
	Bus Promotion activities or Kickstart projects				Do not proceed as no funding available.	

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BUS SERVICE AND STRATEGY REVIEW 2016

A comprehensive and effective bus service is an important part of life for people in Swindon. It allows them to get to work, to places of study, and to the hospital; it supports economic activity in the town by providing access to shops and leisure; and it helps to reduce environmental pressures caused by traffic.

It is of course especially important for those who have no alternative form of transport available.

At the moment, the bus network in Swindon is 95% commercially viable, needing no additional contribution from taxpayers. However, the Council does support some less well-used services, including some evening and Sunday services, and services for smaller communities. We also provide funding for the Swindon Dial A Ride service.

Swindon Borough Council, in common with all councils, is facing large increases in demand and costs for services for children and young people, and vulnerable elderly residents. Up to 2020, we must find savings or reduce the rising cost and demand of future services by between £70m and £80m. This means we must review the way we provide our services, including public transport services.

We have drafted a strategy that revisits the priorities and principles we think we should follow, and which sets out a new way of providing services that do not cover their own costs.

This questionnaire has been designed to seek your views on these proposed changes, and on the services that could be affected. **Whether you are a regular bus passenger or not**, we welcome your opinion on the proposals.

Please let us have your views by **22 August 2016**.

You and your use of the service

1 First of all are you completing this questionnaire as....

Please tick ✓ all that apply.

Someone who uses bus services in Swindon ☐ ₁

A local resident or taxpayer ☐ ₂

A member or user of the Swindon Dial A Ride service ☐ ₃

A Borough or parish councillor ☐ ₄

A bus operator ☐ ₅

Operators please go to Q7

A representative of a local group or organisation (please specify) ☐ ₆

Interested in some other way (please specify) ☐ ₇

2 What is your home postcode? (We will use this only for analysing this questionnaire)

Please write here:

--

3

How often do you use a local bus service for each of these types of activity?

Please tick ✓ one box on each row.

	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Once every two or three weeks	Once a month or so	Less often than that	Never use the bus service
Travel to work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Travel to a school or college	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
To go shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Travel to a hospital or health centre	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Travel to social and leisure activities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

4

And when you use the bus service, how much do you use it at these different times?

Please tick ✓ one box on each row.

	Every week	Every two or three weeks	Once a month	Only occasion- ally	Hardly ever	Never
Monday to Friday daytime	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Monday to Friday evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Saturday daytime	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Saturday evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Sunday daytime	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
Sunday evenings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

5

Do you have any of the following?

Please tick ✓ all that apply

A car available for your personal use	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
A bus stop within easy walking distance of your home	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
A concessionary bus pass	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
None of the above	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

6

How often do you use these items when travelling by bus?

Please tick ✓ one box on each row

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
A buggy or pushchair	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A wheelchair or mobility scooter	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

The principles we propose

Our new strategy sets out several key principles that we expect to guide the way we provide services in the future. Here are some of them:

There are financial principles:

- A fair balance between the needs of passengers and the cost to taxpayers
- Achieving full financial viability of bus services by 2020, with no further need for subsidy from the taxpayer
- Reviews of services to be based on their 'value for money', in other words the extent to which they have to be subsidised in order to continue
- Where new housing development takes place, we will seek contributions from developers to provide a bus service

And there are service principles:

- priority for services that get people to work, to school or college, or to the hospital
- priority given to provide services for rural areas and areas of social need
- ensuring, as far as possible, that people not served by the commercial network can still access the bus service
- a focus on punctuality and on addressing causes of delay

7

Do you agree that these principles are the right ones for us? Are there any you disagree with, or have concerns about? And are there other principles you think we should adopt?

Financial principles

Service principles

A new approach for less well-used services

Our new strategy also sets out a new approach for those services that are less well-used, and which therefore require a higher level of financial support. These are most often services to smaller rural communities, and some evening and Sunday services in the urban area, that don't attract many passengers.

Our intention here is to reduce the cost of providing bus services on these routes and at these times, but still ensuring that people have access to a local bus service and, through that, to the wider network.

What we are thinking of doing is introducing a **BusLink** service. This would be a small vehicle (perhaps carrying 4 -16 passengers at a time) that would replace the normal bus service at times of low usage, running on a published timetable, and from existing bus stops, to one of three transport 'hubs'. Concessionary bus passes could be used on these services.

The hubs would be at places that people often want, or need, to go to, but which are also well served by the normal commercial bus network. So the **BusLink** service would provide not only a replacement service to the hub, but would also allow people to connect easily to services to other parts of town and beyond.

We have three hubs in mind, at **North Swindon** (at the North Orbital), **South Swindon** (in Old Town) and **East Swindon** (at the Great Western Hospital).

These services would be provided by a new **Community Transport organisation**, which would include representatives from local organisations and communities interested in having a **BusLink** service. We would also provide some funding to help get these services up and running.

8 Of course, there are still unanswered questions about the detail of this proposal - timetables, fares and so on. But we would like to have your views. Are there any other approaches - or hub locations - we should consider?

Services likely to be affected by this change

The changes to evening and Sunday services, and the introduction of the BusLink operation, are only likely to affect a limited number of services, as listed below. If you think any of these changes might affect you, please tick the relevant box, and use the space below to tell us more.

Service	Route	Proposed changes to service	Tick here
6	Town Centre to Kingsdown	Evening services to reduce to hourly, Sunday services to be withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
7	Town Centre to Highworth	Evening service to be withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
8	Freshbrook to Chiseldon	Evening service to be withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
9	Wroughton to Freshbrook	Evening service to be withdrawn	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
11A	Swindon to St Andrews Ridge	Sunday service under review	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
12	Blunsdon to North Orbital (peak time extension service)	BusLink between Blunsdon and North Orbital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
19	Swindon to Sparcells	Evening service to be withdrawn Sunday service under review	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
21	Swindon to Penhill Valley	Replace service with BusLink to North Orbital hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 8
22	Swindon to Okus	Evening service to be withdrawn. Extension of service to B & Q to be withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/> 9
23	Coleview to Stratton Park (Sainsbury's)	Replace service with BusLink to Stratton Park (Sainsbury's) or Great Western Hospital hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 10
24	Swindon to Blunsdon	Service to be withdrawn. BusLink between Blunsdon and North Orbital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 11
25	Swindon to Kingshill	Replace service with BusLink to Old Town hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 12
46, 46A	Swindon to Hungerford (Liddington and Wanborough stops only)	Retain service, or BusLink from Liddington and Wanborough to GW Hospital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 13
48, 48A	Swindon to Marlborough (Liddington and Wanborough stops only)	Retain service, or BusLink from Liddington and Wanborough to GW Hospital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 14
51	Blunsdon to Swindon	Early morning services to be reviewed, and possibly replaced with BusLink to North Orbital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 15
65	Swindon to South Marston	Service to be withdrawn. BusLink replacement if demand exists.	<input type="checkbox"/> 16
70A, 72A	Swindon to Marlborough (Chiseldon stops only)	Withdraw funding support for evening service	<input type="checkbox"/> 17
71	Swindon to Alexandra Park and Thorney Park	Service to be reviewed; possible replacement with BusLink to Old Town hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 18
90	Swindon to Hungerford (Wanborough and Bishopstone stops only)	Replace service with BusLink from Wanborough and Bishopstone to GW Hospital Hub	<input type="checkbox"/> 19

9

If you are affected by these changes, or want to comment on them, please use this space to tell us more.

The Dial A Ride service

Under these new arrangements, the Council will also no longer be able to fund the Swindon Dial A Ride service. Where possible, we plan to incorporate Dial A Ride into the new **BusLink** services, connecting passengers with the hubs where they can access the wider network. If this is unsuitable, we may be able to offer vouchers to eligible people so they can make their own choices about how they travel. For instance, these vouchers could be used towards taxi fares.

10

How often, if at all, do you use the Dial A Ride service?

Please tick ✓ one

Several
times a
week

☐ 1

Once or
twice a week

☐ 2

Once every
two or three
weeks

☐ 3

Once a
month or so

☐ 4

Less often
than that

☐ 5

Never use the Dial A Ride

☐ 6

If you never use the Dial A Ride, please go to Q12

11

And how often do you use it for....?

Please tick ✓ one box on each row

Regularly

Occasionally

Never

Shopping

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Visiting the hospital

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Entertainment and social activities

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Visiting friends/relatives

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Travel to work

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

Other activities

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

12 Do you have any views on the proposal to withdraw funding from the Swindon Dial A Ride? Are there alternative approaches to Dial A Ride that we should consider?

Service Improvements

13 We've identified a number of things we could do to improve the service for bus passengers. Some of these might also affect other road users.
So whether you're a regular passenger or not, how strongly would you support us in trying to secure these different improvements to the bus service locally?

Please tick ✓ one box on each row.

	Strongly support	Support to some extent	Don't really support	Don't support at all	Not sure/ don't know
Improved service punctuality	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Better bus stops and interchanges	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
More bus lanes and bus priority measures	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
A modernised bus station	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
More real-time information at bus stops	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

14 Are there any other areas where you think service improvement should be a priority for us?

The bus service pattern

So what will the bus service look like in the future? Here's a summary of what we expect:

Monday to Saturday

- Frequent (at least half-hourly) daytime services to the Town Centre from all urban areas and from main settlements outside the urban area, including Highworth and Wroughton.
- This will include services arriving before 8.00am and leaving after 5.30pm.
- At least hourly evening services to all main areas of Swindon, if demand exists and funding is available.
- Frequent daytime service to and from nearby towns and cities.
- BusLink or other community transport services for services that are not commercially viable, such as some rural services to smaller communities.
- No change to existing use of public buses to transport children to and from school.

Sunday

- Commercially viable Sunday bus services between 8.00am and 6.00pm on a half-hourly basis, or more frequently where demand justifies the service.
- BusLink or other community services where needed to fill 'gaps' in this provision if demand exists and funding is available.

15 What are your views about this pattern of service?

And finally, some questions about you...

16 What was your age on your last birthday?

 years

17 And are you...?

Male ☐ ₁

Female ☐ ₂

Other ☐ ₃

18 How would you describe your current employment status?

Please tick ✓ all that apply

Working full time ☐ ₁

Permanently sick or unable to work ☐ ₅

Working part-time ☐ ₂

Looking after the home ☐ ₆

Self employed ☐ ₃

Unemployed/looking for work ☐ ₇

Student ☐ ₄

Retired ☐ ₈

19 Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?

Please tick ✓ the most appropriate box

White British ☐ ₁

White other ☐ ₂

Black or Black British ☐ ₃

Asian or Asian British ☐ ₄

Mixed race ☐ ₅

Other (please specify) ☐ ₆

20 Do you have a disability that affects your use of public transport?

Please tick ✓ all that apply.

No disability ☐ ₁

☐ ₅ Mental health issue (e.g. depression)

Mobility impairment ☐ ₂

☐ ₆ Prefer not to say

Hearing impairment ☐ ₃

☐ ₇ Other disability (please specify)

Visual impairment ☐ ₄

Thank you very much for your time. You can return your completed questionnaire by e-mail to passengertransport@swindon.gov.uk, hand it in to the **Civic Offices in Euclid Street**, or post it to us at

Passenger Transport Team, Highways and Transport, Swindon Borough Council, Wat Tyler House (West), Beckhampton Street, SWINDON SN1 2JG

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