

Cabinet

Wednesday, 7 September 2016

Additional Information

Written Public Questions - Responses

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**Public Question Time
Cabinet
7th September 2016**

Mr Brian V Cockbill, Stratton St Margaret, has asked the Cabinet Member for Sustainability, Highways, and Transport

1. On page 11 of Appendix 2 Local Bus Strategy for Swindon – April 2013 (DRAFT); the 3rd bullet point states:- "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above the maximum subsidy per passenger guideline will be reviewed (£4.00 per passenger) and either revised or withdrawn unless there are reasons for continuing support, or alternative lower cost provision can be identified within the available budget".

Assuming this £4.00 is based on usage across the bus companies operating in Swindon. Will the Cabinet Member for Transport confirm the use of buses is determined with information from the on-board bus fare machines for each route and give precise details how this figure was calculated?

The Cabinet Member has responded:

Thank you for your question.

1) I can confirm that we use information supplied by the bus operators. The bus operators supply us with monthly passenger data and fares revenue. The cost of the contract is divided by the number of passengers carried, which gives the cost per passenger figure. The only exceptions would be for example another Council whose contract we contribute to, where we would be reliant upon how they work out their cost per passenger or we undertake our own passenger surveys of the route.

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Mr Paul Sunners, representing Swindon Equality Group

2. At a time in which the narrative of austerity is increasingly being questioned, how can SBC quantify the impact of current policies on the people of Swindon, including those who are vulnerable, in terms of fairness and equitability?

The Leader of the Council has responded.

Thank you for question.

2) First, I do not accept your premise. This Council, like the Government, will continue to apply sound financial policies and seek to avoid the reckless spending that occurred in Westminster prior to 2008.

Second, there are no commonly accepted definitions of “equitable” and “fair” hence it would be an expensive and time-consuming exercise to try to quantify the effect of all the Council’s policies as you request. The Council will continue to apply the statutory requirements to provide services within a balanced budget.

Third, we will continue to undertake Diversity Impact Assessments as part of all formal Council decisions.