

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:

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3

How often do you use a local bus service for each of these types of activity?*Please tick ✓ one box on each row.*

	<i>Several times a week</i>	<i>Once or twice a week</i>	<i>Once every two or three weeks</i>	<i>Once a month or so</i>	<i>Less often than that</i>	<i>Never use the bus service</i>
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.*

	<i>Every week</i>	<i>Every two or three weeks</i>	<i>Once a month</i>	<i>Only occasion- ally</i>	<i>Hardly ever</i>	<i>Never</i>
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*

	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
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