

How to make suggestions for improved or enhanced bus services in Wiltshire

Briefing Note No. 21-08

Service: Communities & Neighbourhood Services – Passenger Transport

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On 15 March this year the government published "[Bus Back Better](#)" a national bus strategy for England, which outlines ambitious reform of how bus services are planned and delivered.

The strategy will deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered. It will make buses:

- more frequent
- more reliable
- easier to understand and use
- better co-ordinated
- cheaper.

The strategy is seen as an important part of the “levelling up agenda” and recognises that where commercial bus companies and local transport authorities work closely together buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way to improve transport. Some £3bn has been set aside in this parliament to be spent on increasing bus usage nationally through the national bus strategy.



As a prelude to this strategy the Government’s Better Deal for Bus Users, in March 2020, granted Wiltshire £671,000 as revenue support to help to improve the provision of local bus services in our area in one or more of the following ways:

- to improve current local bus services - for instance increasing evening or weekend frequencies, or supporting additional seasonal services in tourist areas;
- to restore lost bus routes where most needed to ensure people have access to public transport services;
- to support new bus services, or extensions to current services, to access e.g. new housing, employment opportunities, healthcare facilities etc.

Last spring, we consulted on how this grant could best be spent, and I would like to thank those who responded to that consultation; the information provided has been most useful in shaping our thinking.

However, in the year since we have seen tremendous change, but now we are approaching the end of the lockdowns we need to make definite plans of how we will spend this money. Because so much has changed, not only because of the Pandemic, but also because we have many new councillors who may have different priorities, we are seeking up-to-date suggestions on how this money should be spent.

While compiling these requests, please bear in mind that this funding is:

- time-limited, with no guarantee that further funding will be available at the end of the experimental period to allow the improvements to continue.
- this money will need to be spread around the county and so requests for small improvements to existing services are likely to be more successful
- a new all-day service could cost in the region of £150,000 per annum to operate and be difficult to resource
- one additional journey, or an extension of an existing one can make a significant to a community's connectivity

At the moment we are only asking for suggestions for new services or changes/additions to existing services. However, as the National Bus Strategy is implemented, we will be asking for suggestions of improvements that would make significantly more people from your community use public transport. We realise however, that you will need much longer to consult on this with local residents.

If you provided ideas previously, which you consider are still valid you don't need to do anything; they will remain on our list. But if needs have changed, please advise our Bus Network Manager at buses@wiltshire.gov.uk by **Wednesday 14th July 2021**, so that he can assess the feasibility of introducing these on an experimental basis using this funding, over the next 12 – 18 months.

Please accept our apologies for the short timescale for this consultation, but the monies need to be committed in this financial year and some of the suggestions may require lengthy procurement exercises.

If you wish to discuss this request in more detail, or obtain guidance on the feasibility of a suggestion before submitting it, please ring the Bus Network Manager on 01225 713454 or email him at buses@wiltshire.gov.uk.