

Report 2: Agenda Item 10:

At P&E on the 17th March the report below was considered and the proposal adopted. Full Council is asked to note the report and ratify the proposal so this application can be made to Wiltshire Council in time to meet their consultation deadline.

Cllr Campbell Ritchie

23rd March 2020

Report to P&E: 17th March 2019

Briefing Note 20-10 from Wiltshire Council - A summary of the governments £220m “better deal for bus users”

All Wiltshire Council’s have been invited to respond to the above Briefing Note, which was received on the 26th February 2020.

The key part of the Briefing Note – and the only part which give Malmesbury access to additional funding under this initiative is the following section:

Supporting bus services (up to £30m available)

Much of this funding is for experimental projects and a lump sum of £671,171 has been specifically allocated to Wiltshire Council to improve local bus services over a 12-18-month period and it is this funding which we are seeking advice from elected members and town and parish councils on the best way to spend it. This briefing will also be sent to Community Engagement Managers and area boards.

The Government has informed us that it expects this funding to be used to improve the provision of local bus services in one or more of the following ways:

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

The Government also expects us to provide them with an outline of how the money will be used before they release it to us but has given us very little time to do this. We can therefore only do a very basic consultation exercise in the time available, which is why we need your assistance.

We would therefore be grateful to receive from you, details of any requests you have received for bus service improvements, that you believe are causing problems for residents in your area and which you are confident would be well used by them if provided. Please email this information direct to Wiltshire Council’s Passenger Transport Unit at buses@wiltshire.gov.uk by **Friday 27 March 2020**, so that they can assess the feasibility of introducing these on an experimental basis using this funding.

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. Please also bear in mind that use of 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 than those for completely new all-day services, which could cost in the region of £150,000 per annum to operate and be difficult to resource.

Please accept our apologies for the short timescale for this consultation, but the deadlines have been imposed upon us by the Department for Transport and are necessary in order for us to be able to claim the funding in good time to spend during the next financial year.

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

Proposal:

Taking account of the limitations in the funding available it is proposed that Malmesbury Town Council should make the following suggestions for service improvements to receive additional funding:

- (I) The re-introduction of a basic Sunday service to Chippenham and Swindon – particularly the railway stations – to encourage visitors/ tourism and support local residents
- (II) The extension of the Town Bus service to the new estates at Filands and Cowbridge
- (III) Making the service to Cirencester call at Kemble railway station, with timings to fit connections
- (IV) Adding an earlier and later Chippenham and Swindon daily service to connect with earlier and later trains to make it easier for commuters to or from either Bath/ Bristol or further afield to replace car use.

To support why Malmesbury is a priority for addition bus services and spending we can reference the attached 'transport desert' report:

<https://www.wiltshiretimes.co.uk/news/18246083.calne-malmesbury-marlborough-become-transport-deserts-new-research-claims/>

Financial Implications

This proposal does not have any direct financial consequences for Malmesbury Town Council.

Earlier bus services from the Cross Hayes may lead to a decision to open the new public toilets in the Cross Hayes earlier in the morning.

Councillor Campbell Ritchie

9th March 2020