

In order to succeed, a QCS area needs to have a solid base of sound mainly commercial bus routes, so that enough profit can be generated to both maintain the social necessary but unprofitable bus routes, and improve the bus network as a whole, within that same QCS area.

11 out of 26 mainly commercial services in Wiltshire (as listed in Appendix 2 of the Pre-Consultation Paper) operate within or through our proposed QCS zone - second only to Salisbury with 13.

These are:

### **TOWN/CITY LOCAL SERVICES**

44 Chippenham town services

### **INTERURBAN SERVICES**

33/X33 Chippenham – Calne – Bromham - Devizes

49 Swindon - Avebury- Devizes -Trowbridge

55 Swindon - Royal Wootton Bassett – Calne – Chippenham

87 Trowbridge – Westbury – Erlestoke – Devizes

231 Bath – Box – Corsham – Chippenham

265 Bath – Bradford – Trowbridge – Warminster – Salisbury

272 Bath – Atworth – Melksham – Bowerhill

X31 Bath – Box – Corsham – Chippenham

X34 Chippenham – Melksham – Trowbridge – Frome

X72 Bath – Melksham – Devizes – Urchfont/The Lavingtons

We believe, given the number of passengers that these services carry and the estimated revenue that they generate, that enough profit can be generated to both maintain the social necessary but unprofitable bus routes, and improve the bus network as a whole, within our proposed QCS area. We therefore ask that our QCS proposal be examined by the review optioneering and financial modelling process, with a view to implementation as a preferred solution.

Once the validity of our financial assertions has been established, the information shown below, based directly on that shown in Appendix 1 of the pre-consultation report, gives the following accurate indication of the potential savings from escaping the costs of the council-funded bus service contracts listed, whilst still retaining each of the actual services themselves at least at the level they operate at currently:

### **DAYTIME INTERURBAN BUS SERVICES**

X33/33 Derry Hill Diversion - £4614.84

X34 Diversion via Notton - £7219.68

X34 Paxcroft Mead Diversion - £20000

49 Trowbridge to Swindon - £39499.96

X72 Urchfont - Devizes (early mornings) – £10071.96

92 Malmesbury to Chippenham - £105384.39

Daytime Interurban Bus Services Potential Saving = £186790.83 (24% of Spend on Daytime Interurban Bus Services)

### **DAYTIME TOWN BUS SERVICES**

1, 1a, 1c Devizes Town Services - £170997.96

10 Corsham Town Service - £79305.84

14 Melksham Town Service - £138479.06

30 Malmesbury Town Service - £44899.47

44 Chippenham Town Allington Way - £9927.68

50, 54, 57 Warminster Town/Rural Services - £128935.48

58 Westbury Town Service + Westbury – Frome - £92335.88

T1 Trowbridge Town Bus Service - £45000

65,66,67,68 Trowbridge Town Services - £52615.68

98 Bradford on Avon Town Service - £82112.08

DT – WW Devizes Taxibus – Waiblingen Way - £995.88

DT – RG Devizes Taxibus – Roundway Gardens - £1828.08

Daytime Town Bus Services Potential Saving = £847433.09 (80% of Spend on Daytime Town Bus Services)

### **DAYTIME RURAL BUS SERVICES - REGULAR**

35/635 Chippenham to Yatton Keynell and Castle Combe - £92000

68/69 ZigZag Corsham – Melksham – Trowbridge - £81549.80

77, 85, 87 Trowbridge – Steeple Ashton – Devizes - £63965.87

87 Devizes – Bratton – Westbury – Trowbridge - £13493.90

91 Chippenham – Dauntsey Vale & The Somerfords - £35228

94 Trowbridge – Westwood – Limpley Stoke – Bath - £45786.64

228 Colerne – Bath - £10000.08

Daytime Rural Bus Services – Regular Potential Saving = £342024.29 (16% of Spend on Daytime Rural Bus Services)

### **EVENING BUS SERVICES**

55A Swindon – Chippenham evenings - £108615.40

231 Chippenham – Corsham – Bath - £17250.72

234 Chippenham – Trowbridge evenings - £46867.68

265 Trowbridge – Bath evenings - £61619.48

271 Bath – Melksham – Devizes – Urchfont - £53154.84

Evening Bus Services Potential Saving = £287508.12 (42% of Spend on Evening Bus Services)

### **SUNDAY BUS SERVICES**

55A Swindon – Chippenham (Sundays) - £33197.69

231/271 Chippenham/Devizes to Bath - £35292.28

265 Trowbridge – Warminster - £34016.40

Sunday Bus Services Potential Saving = £102506.37 (62% of Spend on Sunday Bus Services)

**TOTAL POTENTIAL SAVING** = £1766262.70 (34% of Council-funded bus service contracts Total Spend)

We note that Daytime Town Bus Services form a significant proportion of the services listed above. Therefore we do not intend to rely on profit from the QCS network alone to secure the provision of these bus services. Instead, we intend to underpin this by using the flexibility to alter the rail fare structure that Community Rail Designation offers to generate an additional £1 per passenger journey per annum at the following stations (figures based on ORR 2013/2014 statistics) :

Chippenham - £1826343

Melksham - £23930

Trowbridge - £849928

Westbury - £486546

Dilton Marsh - £20084

Warminster - £370416

**TOTAL = £3577247**

At rates publicly attributed to both First and Frome Minibuses, this revenue would be enough to fund the equivalent of 15 town bus routes, each expanded to operate 19 hours per day, 7 days a week, all year round, connecting with rail services as standard. Rail passengers holding a valid ticket to any of the stations listed above would be entitled to a free add-on bus journey within the relevant town zone.

This is one of the many reasons why it is firmly in WCs interest to fully endorse our bid for Designated Community Rail status.

We also note that WC wish to establish the ability and willingness of local communities to meet a much greater proportion of their transport needs through community-based transport provision. However, this needs to be done in a way that plays to the strengths of community transport rather than exposing weaknesses such as the following which have been put forward by a local community transport provider while discussing the challenges of them providing regular daily bus services:

Volunteer Drivers maximum 36 hrs/wk @ £8/hr - yes £8.00/hr

Running costs fuel o/hd etc £1.80/ mile.

Problem is driver coverage, most of drivers retired and when are ill or just not want to work certain days, often has to "borrow" commercial bus drivers to get coverage. School bus gets priority.

Big problem is fare collection, the community bus drivers do not want to handle money and the management set up has no ability to handle the finances. We discussed the need for prepaid fares and TWCRP travel passes for Melksham - but the travelling demographic cannot handle e-ticket technologies.

Extra buses needed for maintenance and breakdown coverage.

The bus manager is becoming a full time job - difficult to find the volunteers for the daily commitment needed, legislation compliance.

PSV licence needed > 16 seater - beyond the average volunteer confidence.

School runs are the big commitment and use the most buses hence conflict with commercial timetable frequency and number of drivers.

No grants for running costs only for capital bus purchase.

For a 10 mile round trip allow 30 mins plus 15 min contingency = 45 mins driver time £6.00 + £18.00 fuel o/hd = £24.00 per 10 mile trip.

We were looking at 3 morning trips and 4 afternoon trips so daily 7 times £24.00 = £ 168.00 per day plus bus depreciation.

28 seater Buses 2nd hand £15k plus £5k refurbish!

However, we would be willing to discuss the possibility of community transport providers playing to their strengths by taking on the operation of **DAYTIME RURAL SERVICES - INFREQUENT** contracts as listed in Appendix 1 of the pre-consultation report. These services are an ideal fit for Community Transport, as their operation places less pressure on driver coverage. Also, 75-90% of consultation questionnaire respondents using them were aged over 65, the total cost of such services is relatively low, and the services are usually very popular with their users, who often travel every week.

Community transport bus services converted in this manner would be positively considered for QCS Clearance Certificate status.

Finally, we note that two of the most costly regular daytime rural bus service contracts as listed in Appendix 1 of the pre-consultation report are the 19/20/21/22 Marlborough-Bedwyn-Hungerford area services and the Connect 2 Wiltshire Pewsey Vale Service at £201228.85 and £346452 per annum respectively. Our MidWilts Explorer bus service proposals would facilitate the saving of one vehicle and driver across the above routes, thus clearing the way for a resulting significant cost saving compared to the figures mentioned above, whilst at the same time providing a step change in the overall level of service on offer throughout the Mid-South Wilts Corridor.

Overall, we believe that the £2.5 million reduction target in terms of spending on passenger transport can be reached as follows:

SAVINGS FROM ADOPTING QCS IN NORTH/WEST WILTSHIRE – £1.75 million

SAVINGS TO MIDWILTS SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF WHS MIDWILTS EXPLORER BUS NETWORK - £250000

SAVINGS THROUGH COMMUNITY TRANSPORT OPERATION OF **DAYTIME RURAL SERVICES - INFREQUENT** CONTRACTS - £300000

SAVINGS FROM PERSUADING BUS OPERATORS TO PROVIDE COMMERCIAL SERVICES IF FUNDING FOR COUNCIL-SUPPORTED SERVICES WERE WITHDRAWN - £200000

**TOTAL** = £2.5 million

**NOTE** – The above figure does not include £3.5 million generated from altering the TransWilts Rail fare structure to provide funding for vastly expanded, improved and fully integrated Daytime Town Bus Services.