

Department for Transport, Environment & Leisure
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Your ref:
Our ref: PJG/LMW/PT-A622

Dear

Changes to bus services 46 & 48 through Baydon, Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Axford, Mildenhall, & Chilton Foliat

As you are probably aware, the operation of bus service 46 & 48 is funded by Wiltshire Council and the law requires that we review and retender such services every few years. The existing contract for these routes is due to expire on the 31st May 2010 and so we have been reviewing the operation and usage of both services in order to ascertain how best to replace them.

During the last 6 months, we have undertaken a number of surveys on these services and this has revealed the following issues:

1. Whilst service 48 is reasonably well used by residents of Aldbourne, Ramsbury and Baydon to travel to/from Swindon, service 46 is less popular with only limited use by passengers travelling to/from Hungerford, except on Saturdays.
2. Very few passengers now use these services to travel to/from Axford, Mildenhall & Chilton Foliat, or from points along Lottage Road in Aldbourne.
3. Increased traffic congestion and delays mean that the buses used on these routes are finding it difficult to run reliably.

What has become particularly apparent is that despite an increase in passengers a few years ago when the frequency was increased, usage is gradually tailing off again and so regrettably with increasing pressures on public spending, it is difficult for us to justify maintaining the existing level of service on these routes throughout the day.

We have therefore asked several bus operators to provide us with prices for operating 4 possible alternative timetables, which we believe will meet the needs of the majority of bus users in your area and which can be operated more reliably using just 2 buses. These are attached and key features include:

- Buses running approximately every 2 hours between Ramsbury, Aldbourne, Baydon & Swindon, but with extra journeys to maintain an hourly service at busier times, particularly on Saturdays.
- Morning peak hour journey to Swindon from Ramsbury, Aldbourne & Mildenhall will be largely unaltered but afternoon peak hour service reduced to run just once per hour.
- Weekday service to/from Hungerford reduced to 3 journeys in each direction.
- Additional late afternoon journey provided from Marlborough to assist students staying for extra curricular activities.

Options A, B & C are very similar but with slight differences to the times that buses return from Swindon and Hungerford in the early afternoon. Option D also alters the times of some of the morning buses to enable them to call at Wanborough if required by Swindon Borough Council.

The decision as to which option we decide to go with, will largely be dependent on the prices received and the number of journeys that Swindon Borough Council wish to fund to run via Wanborough. However, we would welcome your views as to whether there are any essential transport needs of regular bus users from your village that would not be met by any of these timetables, so that we can try to rectify them in the final version.

If you have any comments on the proposals, I would be grateful if you could make me aware of these by 21st March 2010. Please note, however, that with the current timetable costing Wiltshire council tax payers in excess of £200,000 per year to provide, retaining the existing level of service is regrettably not an option in the current financial climate.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Phil Grocock
Wiltshire Council Bus Network Manager

cc: Councillors Peggy Dow and Chris Humphries