

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES

3 OCTOBER 2017

REPORT TO CABINET

RATIONALISATION OF SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES 2018/2019

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To make proposals for the rationalisation of supported bus services across the County Borough to meet a proposed budget reduction of £188,000 in 2018/19, as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority.

- 2.1 The proposal links to the Corporate Improvement Plan 2016-20 (Reviewed 2017-18) Priority Three – Smarter use of resources with alignment to the MTFS

3. Background.

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Welsh Government (WG) support the provision of regional and local bus services by subsidising routes that are not commercially viable. These services serve routes that enable residents who live along them to access employment, education, health care and social activities.
- 3.2 BCBC's core budget for supported bus services is £318,000 in 2017/18.
- 3.2 The allocation provided to BCBC by Welsh Government through the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) is £381,193 in 2017/18, of which a base amount of £85,029 should be spent on funding Community Transport with the remainder, £296,164, to be spent on the region's core strategic bus network.
- 3.3 As a result of the above allocations the budget for supported bus services in 2017/18 is £614,064 (£318,000 + £296,164).
- 3.4 It is unknown at this time as to the level of BSSG funding to be allocated in 2018/19, but for the purposes of this report it has been assumed to remain unchanged.
- 3.5 The terms and conditions for the grant provided by Welsh Government for 2017/18 (BSSG) state:-

'The purpose of the funding is to support your expenditure in exercising your powers under the relevant legislation - to support and maintain the core strategic bus network in your area and to improve connectivity.

Additionally to support the introduction of Voluntary Welsh Bus Quality Standards (VWBQS), and for the provision of certain bus and other local transport services, which may include an extension to or variation of an existing service; or a new bus

or community transport service; plus to develop close and effective partnership working (e.g. statutory bus Quality Partnership Schemes or Quality Contracts).

You should use the grant to promote social inclusion and wellbeing through the provision of public transport services that improve accessibility to essential services and facilities – e.g. training and work, transport interchanges, medical facilities, leisure or community centres

We are keen to encourage sensible and complementary networks of local transport services to promote accessibility and modal shift as well as contributing to improve cross-boundary services

3.6 It is therefore appropriate for the Council to approach the reduction in service provision in a manner that will enable the retention of the BSSG by providing support for core strategic bus network and community transport.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 In the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 to 2020-21 and Council Tax 2017-18 report that went to Council on the 1st March 2017 in the a reduction of £188,000 is identified from Bridgend's core budget of £318,000 for supported bus services in 2018/19 which would leave **£130,000** for supported bus services.

4.2 If this reduction is approved, the likely overall budget for supported bus services in 2018/19, is likely to be £426,164 (£130,000 core funding + £296,164 available WG grant).

4.4 During 2012/13 Sewta, the Regional Transport Consortia for South East Wales, set up a Bus Funding Project Board (BFPB) with the remit to develop a mechanism to administer the Regional Transport Services Grant and then to manage it. Prior to Sewta ceasing to operate, its Board decided that the BFPB should continue and manage the BSSG, with Monmouthshire County Council as its lead authority.

4.5 A peer review of the core strategic regional services was undertaken by the BFPB in 2015 to agree what would be classed as strategic services with Bridgend County Borough Council. 6 services and various cross boundary services that were put forward were considered to be appropriate. The various cross boundary services between Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan were considered appropriate as well as community transport support and the grant administration costs. If these regional services were removed then there is a possibility that some of the BSSG would be withdrawn by Welsh Government.

4.6 An impact assessment has also been undertaken on all of the supported public transport routes to assess the impact that the withdrawal might have on the public, with a maximum score of 220 available and a higher score representing the greatest impact. Contracts were assessed and their impact scored on the following basis;

	Impact Assessment Category	Weighting (Maximum Score)
1	The number of users per journey	70
2	The subsidy per passenger	50
3	The unavailability of alternative services	30

4	The likelihood of related commercial bus service withdrawals	25
5	The loss of journeys for shift workers	10
6	The loss of journeys for healthcare and hospital visiting	20
7	The loss of journeys for education and training	15
	MAXIMUM SCORE	220

4.7 Appendix 1 shows the methodology used.

4.8 Table 1 provides a list of supported bus services, cross boundary services and grant administration that have utilised the above methodology and have been scored accordingly and placed in priority order. The cross boundary services have not been given a score as we contribute to other Authorities who pay for the bulk of the services.

4.9 The table also includes the type of service whether it is regional or Local.

Service No	Operator	Route	Impact Assessment July 17 (220)	18/19 Estimated Annual Cost (£)	18/19 Estimated Cumulative Cost (£)	Comments / Implications	Type of Service
	VOG Council	Cross Boundary Services (VOG) Bridgend - Llantwit Major and Greenlinks Service (Community Trans.)		£21,891.86	£21,891.86	Local bus services operated on behalf of VOG Council. Contribution from BCBC for the percentage of the bus service operating in the County of Bridgend.	Regional
	RCT Council	Cross Boundary Services (RCT) - Pontypridd - Bridgend & Porthcawl, Porth - Evanstown, Aberdare - Bridgend via Talbot Green.		£48,871.09	£70,762.95	Local bus services operated on behalf of RCT Council. Contribution from BCBC for the percentage of the bus service operating in the County of Bridgend.	Regional
	BCBC Grant Administration			£25,000.00	£95,762.95	Administration of Grant, by BCBC Finance Department.	Regional and Local
	Possible Indexation All Contracts			£5,000.00	£100,762.95	Indexation on all local bus service contracts excluding deminimis contracts.	Regional and Local
70	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Cymmer (Evenings Mon - Sat)	177	£ 51,311.52	£152,074.47	1) Operates cross boundary into Neath Port Talbot area. 2) Route operates along major traffic corridor in the Llynfi valley. 3) It sieves commuter traffic from going through Junction 36 of the M4. 4) Relieves congestion on the A48 and M4. 5) Connects with trains at Maesteg and Bridgend Railway Stations for commuters (tackles congestion and encourages modal shift). 6) Linking transport and regional hub in Bridgend for connectivity to the regional and national transport network. 7) Improves access to the regional shopping centre (McArthur Glen – Pines), located at Junction 36 of the M4. 8) Improves access to employment in an area of high deprivation. 9) Links to Princess of Wales Hospital, providing health care services.	Regional
67	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Aberkenfig via Pen-y-Fai (Monday to Saturday)	167	£ 18,720.00	£170,794.47	Provides Access to Sarn Surgery No alternative bus services for Aberkenfig & Pen-y-Fai residents to access Sarn Surgery. A through bus is available for Aberkenfig residents travelling between Bridgend and Maesteg (70/71 Service). Reduced service for Pen-y-Fai residents (between 09:15 and 14:40 Monday to Friday only)(Service 81). This contract is part council funded and commercial. There is a likelihood that if funding was removed then it is possible that the commercial section of the route would not be commercially viable	Local
37	EASYWAY	Maesteg Parc Estate, Daytime, (Monday to Saturday)	164	£ 28,750.80	£199,545.27	No alternative bus services for Maesteg Parc Estate residents, apart from accessing the main roads (Commercial Street). However, this is quite a distance for some residents living in Maesteg Parc (0.7miles).	Local
X2	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Porthcawl (Evenings Mon-Sat)	163	£ 9,360.00	£208,905.27	1) Links to cross boundary service into Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. 2) Links key regional settlements. 3) Connects with trains at Bridgend Railway Station for commuters (tackles congestion and encourages modal shift). 4) Linking transport and regional hub in Bridgend for connectivity to the regional network. 5) Enhance business case for the METRO.	Regional

63B	FIRST CYMRU	Diversion through Mawdlam and Kenfig (Mon-Sat)	159	£ 9,360.00	£218,265.27	1) Linking transport and regional hub in Bridgend for connectivity to the regional network. 2) Links to Princess of Wales Hospital, providing health care services. 3) Tackles congestion and encourages modal shift. 4) Enhance business case for the METRO.	Regional
65-66	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Talbot Green via Heol-y-Cyw (Early morning, Daytime and Evening Mon-Sat)	142	£ 129,841.92	£348,107.19	1) Operates cross boundary into Rhondda Cynon Taf area. 2) Relieves congestion on the A473, A4119 and M4. 3) Serves a major health facility (Princess of Wales Hospital). 4) Improves access to regional employment centre, especially industrial parks south of the M4. 5) Links to clinic on Wimbourne Road, Pencoed, providing health care services.	Regional
16	EASYWAY	Bridgend to Blaengarw via Heol-y-Myndd and Braich-y-cymmer (Daytime Mon-Sat)	140	£ 45,645.60	£393,752.79	1) Route operates along major traffic corridor in the Garw valley. 2) Connects with trains at Bridgend Railway Station for commuters (tackles congestion and encourages modal shift). 3) Linking transport and regional hub in Bridgend for connectivity to the regional and national transport network. 4) It sieves commuter traffic from going through Junction 36 of the M4. 5) Improves access to the regional shopping centre (McArthur Glen – Pines), located at Junction 36 of the M4. 6) Improves access to employment in an area of high deprivation. 7) Links to Princess of Wales Hospital, providing health care services. Alternative bus services operate on the majority of this route, apart from Heol-y-Mynydd, Wigan Terrace and Braichycymmer. Also Quarella Road, if Service No. 81 is cancelled.	Regional
73	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Blaengarw, Evenings (Monday to Saturday)	140	£ 26,616.72	£420,369.51	Provides Access to Princess of Wales Hospital Commercially operated journeys are available on this service, but at a reduced frequency.	Local
76	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Bettws, Vale View Diversion (Monday to Saturday)	135	£ 3,120.00	£423,489.51	Provides Access to Sarn surgery and Princess of Wales hospital for Vale View residents Commercially operated journeys are available on this service. No alternative service for Vale View, Woodland Way and Highfield Place residents. Residents will need to access the main road (Sarn Hill - 0.25 miles).	Local
51	EASYWAY	Bridgend to Oaklands Road, Daytime, (Monday to Saturday)	125	£ 11,263.20	£434,752.71	Provides Access to Bridgend Library / Rec Centre. No alternative bus services, apart from accessing the main road (Park Street - X1, X2, X4 & 172 Services). However the distance is not excessive (0.2 miles).	Local
803	TRAVELFINAL	Danygraig to Porthcawl - (Monday to Saturday)	125	£ 26,520.00	£461,272.71	Provides Access Portway Surgery Alternative bus services available (X2 and 1 72 Services) except for Danygraig residents, who will have no alternative bus service, apart from accessing the main road (Bridgend Road) which is quite a distance to travel (0.55 miles). This contract is mostly council funded and a small part is commercial. There is likelihood that if funding was removed, then it is possible that the commercial section of the route would not be commercially viable.	Local
61	PEYTON TRAVEL	Nottage to Porthcawl (Circular) (Monday to Saturday)	120	£ 13,712.40	£474,985.11	Provides Access to South Road Surgery and Portway Surgery. The contract has been retendered due to the 14-15 MTFS and new contractor took over in July 15. No alternative bus services for local residents in Nottage and Western Porthcawl. However, an alternative service is available on West Road and South Road (63B Service). However, this is quite a distance for some residents living to the west of Nottage and Porthcawl West (0.8 miles). The route of this service is planned to be extended to Newton Nottage Road, when a new surgery opens.	Local
81	EASYWAY	Bridgend to Pen-y-Fai via Brackla & Coity Morning & Afternoon (Monday to Friday)	118	£ 18,200.00	£493,185.11	Provides Access to Princess of Wales Hospital, as well as Quarella Road/Wildmill Residents. Commercially operated journeys in this timetable are available on this service, but only between 09:15 and 14:40 (Monday to Friday). Outside these times Penyfai will have the 67 Service (if retained). Other services available for Brackla (62, 64, 66 & 404 Services). However residents living on the Princess Way corridor will need to access Brackla triangle (0.82 miles). Coity has an alternative service (73 Service but this service is also under review).	Local
68/69	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Cefn Glas, Early morning and Evening (Monday to Saturday)	115	£ 38,953.20	£532,138.31	Provides access to Bridgend Town Centre No alternative bus services, apart from accessing the main road (Park Street - X1, X2, X4 & 172 Services). However, this is quite a distance for residents living in the northern part of Cefn Glas (0.78 miles). Commercially operated journeys are available on this service throughout the day.	Local
52	EASYWAY	Bridgend to Broadlands, Daytime (Monday to Saturday)	111	£ 11,263.20	£543,401.51	Provides Access to Bridgend Library / Rec Centre No alternative bus services for Broadlands Estate residents, apart from walking to the main	Local

						road (Park Street) for an alternative service (X1, X2, X4 & 172 Services). However, this is quite a distance for some residents living in the Southern part of the Broadlands Estate (0.8 miles).	
63B	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Porthcawl (Early morning and Evening Mon- Sat)	102	£ 43,495.92	£586,897.43	1) Serves areas of major planned population and employment growth. 2) Links to Princess of Wales Hospital, providing health care services. 3) Links key regional settlements. 4) Improves access to employment. 5) Serves areas of major planned population and employment growth. 6) Linking transport and regional hub in Bridgend for connectivity to the regional network. 7) Improves access to the regional shopping centre (McArthur Glen – Pines). 8) Links key regional settlements (Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea & Vale of Glamorgan). 9) Enhance business case for the METRO. No alternative bus service. Commercially operated journeys are available on this service throughout the day.	Regional
62	FIRST CYMRU	Bridgend to Pencoed - 2 No. Evening Journey's - (Monday to Saturday)	80	£ 11,441.04	£598,338.47	Provides transport link for residents visiting the Princess of Wales Hospital, via Bridgend Town Centre. Alternative evening bus service from Pencoed Monument (404 Service). However, this is quite a distance for residents living in the western area over the level crossing of Pencoed (0.84 miles). Commercially operated journeys are available on this service throughout the day.	Local
73	EASYWAY	Pyle to Fforddygyfraith, (Tue & Fri only)	80	£ 9,360.00	£607,698.47	Provides access to Princess of Wales Hospital Alternative services available for Pyle residents (63, 63B, X1 & X4 Services), Cefn Cribbwr residents (63 & 63B Service) and Coity (81 Service, but this service is also under review). Fforddygyfraith residents will have no alternative service, apart from accessing the main roads (Cefn Road 1.1 miles – Service No. 63/63B or Maesteg Road A4063 1.7 miles – Service No. 70 & 71).	Local

Table 1

- 4.10 As can be seen from Comments / Implication column of Table 1 there are some routes that have alternative services along the main roads but are not as accessible as the current services. Other routes would be at a reduced frequency.
- 4.11 Based on likely available funding of £426,164, as indicated in paragraph 4.2, and comparing against the Estimated Cumulative Cost column above, the number of services that could be provided within the available funding will end at the '76' service with the current budget reductions.
- 4.12 In terms of impact upon the local communities, discussions have been held previously with the service providers (First Cymru, Easyway and Peyton Travel) on the possible reduction in services as outlined above. At those meetings they could not give an indication as to whether they would operate any removed services commercially, however they would consider the matter further once a decision has been made as to what services would be rationalised.
- 4.13 In seeking to enact the proposal the views of persons impacted upon by the proposed changes needs to be ascertained. This will consist of an initial discussion with the bus operators to ascertain if they would consider taking on any of the routes as commercially viable. Following on from this a wider online consultation including facebook and twitter is to be undertaken advising the proposal and seeking any views. Details of the consultation will also be sent as part of a press release emailed to various stakeholders within the county borough.
- 4.14 A partial mitigation to the above would be to utilise the Bridgend Community Transport. Bridgend Community Transport currently offers accessible transport solutions for charitable and voluntary groups, and individuals, through a range of services including the provision of fully accessible minibuses for community groups, dial a ride, community car, and wheels to work services for individuals. However,

not all their operations permit the use of concessionary passes and persons wishing to use the service would need to register as members of the scheme.

- 4.15 Under the provisions of the contracts between Bridgend County Borough Council and the bus operators, either party has to give a 12-week notice for changes to, or withdrawal of subsidised services.
- 4.16 The current supported bus service contracts commenced in November 2016 to run for 12 months with the option to extend for a further 48 months. In addition to these tendered bus services, the Authority also has de-minimise contracts with bus operators. However the Council or Bus Operator can terminate any of these contracts, as long as twelve weeks' written notice is given by either party.
- 4.17 Looking beyond this review, there is to be further consideration of future provision and the role of bus subsidy within the context of the wider city deal and metro. This is to ensure alignment with emerging regional transport priorities and development of a truly integrated transport system for the Cardiff City region.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 There is no effect upon Policy Framework or Procedure Rules

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Screening Form has been completed and this highlights potential impacts with a recommendation to complete a full impact assessment before the decision is made to remove any services. It is therefore proposed that, prior to Cabinet approving the permanency of the proposals contained within this report, a period of consultation is undertaken, following which a Full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken. The conclusion and future presentation of a Full EIA will support Cabinet in considering a way forward on this proposal.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 A budget reduction will have a financial implication upon Bridgend Bus Station, as following the submitted cabinet report in January 2015, departure charges were introduced on buses using the bus station from 01 April 2015. This was introduced in light of the budget reduction for Bridgend Bus Station of £40,000 for 2015/2016 MTFS proposals. Therefore, if the recommended contracted local bus services supported by BCBC through its own funding were cancelled, then this will reduce the annual income for Bridgend Bus Station by approximately £4,100 as a result of less usage of the bus station by buses.
- 7.2 If the level of saving suggested by this proposal is not met, other public realm services are likely to be impacted upon to make up any shortfall.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - Considers the content of this report and agrees that a 12 week consultation is undertaken on the proposals following which a Full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken,

- Agrees to a further report outlining the results of the consultation, to be accompanied by a Full Equality Impact Assessment, to be presented at a future meeting of Cabinet in order that the proposals outlined in this report may be considered.

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September 2017

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Background documents - Equalities Impact Screening Form

APPENDIX 1

IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCORING RATIONALE

1 Users per Journey

Users per Journey	Score
1 to 4	20
5 to 9	40
10 to 14	60
15+	70

2 Subsidy per passenger

Subsidy per user	Score
£0.01 to £0.99	50
£1.00 to £1.99	40
£2.00 to £2.99	30
£3.00 to £4.99	20
£5.00 to £9.99	10
£10.00+	0

3 Unavailability of alternative services

Unavailability of alternative services	Score
Mondays to Saturdays Daytime with no alternative service	30
School days only	15
Mondays to Saturdays Evening & Sundays	10
Mondays to Saturdays Daytime with an alternative service	0

4 Likelihood of related commercial bus service withdrawals

	Score
Weekdays	25
Saturday	20
Sunday	10

5 Loss of journeys for shift workers

Mondays to Saturdays - the number of journeys that operate on the supported route before 0800 and after 1800 divided by the total number of journeys on the supported route multiplied by 10.

Sundays - total number of journeys operating on the supported route divided by the total number of journeys on the supported route multiplied by 10.

6 Loss of journeys for healthcare and hospital visiting

Mondays to Saturdays - the number of journeys that operate on the supported route between approximately 0900 & 2200 divided by the total number of journeys on the supported route multiplied by 20.

Sundays - the number of journeys that operate on the supported route between approximately 1300 & 2200 divided by the total number of journeys on the supported route multiplied by 20.

7 Loss of journeys for education and training

Mondays to Fridays - the number of journeys that operate on the supported route after 0800 and before 2100 divided by the total number of journeys on the supported route multiplied by 15.