

Annex 5u – MTFP Proposals for Passenger Transport 2019/20

The MTFP Proposals for 2019/20 include reducing revenue support for supported local bus services by £68k and raising a income stream of £100k through the introduction of bus station departure charges at Caerphilly, Bargoed and Blackwood.

Reduced Revenue Support

To achieve the £68k saving, it is proposed that all supported local bus services with a subsidy per passenger of £5 or more are withdrawn.

Below is a summary of the proposed changes necessary to the supported bus service network necessary to achieve the target saving :

Contract	Route / Journeys affected	Days of Week	Subsidy per passenger	Passengers carried (per annum)	CCBC cost (per annum)	Impact
00J-71D (Stagecoach – service J)	1800 Caerphilly to Rudry 1815 Rudry to Caerphilly 0725 Rudry to Caerphilly	Mon – Fri Mon – Fri Sat	£8.57	759	£6,120	Curtailed service – 7 return journeys from Caerphilly to Rudry (Mon to Fri) and 4 return journeys from Caerphilly to Rudry (Sat) provided by Connect2 will continue.
019-71D (Glyn Evans – service 13)	Afternoon return journey from Manmoel to Blackwood	Tue & Fri	£6.87	459	£3,152	Service withdrawn – no alternative provision exists.
004-710 (Stagecoach – service 4 / C9)	1820 Tredegar to Pontlottyn 1848 Pontlottyn to Tredegar 1915 Tredegar to YYF, Ystrad Mynach 2020 YYF, Ystrad	Mon - Sat	£6.68	8,670	£50,929	Service withdrawn – no evening service between Tredegar and Rhymney, Abertysswg, Tirphil, Brithdir and Cefn Hengoed.

	Mynach to Tredegar 2125 Tredegar to YYF, Ystrad Mynach 2230 YYF, Ystrad Mynach to Tredegar					Cross boundary service with Blaenau Gwent CBC.
X38-71D (New Adventure Travel – service X38)	0620 Pontypridd to Nelson 0630 Nelson to Pontypridd	Mon - Fri	£5.43	1,173	£6,375	Journeys withdrawn – 12 return journeys on the X38 between Pontypridd and Bargoed will continue.
TOTAL				11,061	£66,576	
Key Mon – Fri: Mondays to Fridays Mon – Sat: Mondays to Saturdays Tue & Fri: Tuesdays and Fridays						

A summary of the responses received following the email sent to the local ward members, town and community councils and community partnerships affected by the proposed changes to the subsidised bus network, following the detail proposals reported to the Special Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on 18 December 2018 is summarised below:

Alun Evans (Officer response on behalf of Blaenau Gwent CBC)

Blaenau Gwent residents rely heavily on the bus network to access employment and other services. We have low levels of car ownership and access to a comprehensive, frequent and reliable public transport service, especially for those who reside in areas of high deprivation, is critical.

It is therefore disappointing that Caerphilly CBC is considering removing the evening services on route 4 that serve some of Blaenau Gwent most deprived wards. I appreciate it is only the evening services that will be removed but residents in areas such as Cefn Golau utilise this service as they have no other alternative mean of travel.

Have you considered how these residents may access employment and services if the service is removed?

I would therefore wish to register my opposition to the removal of the evening services on route 4 and would hope you re-consider any such proposal.

Councillor Carl Cuss

Concerned about the withdrawal of evening bus services between Tredegar and Bargoed / Ystrad Mynach – particularly the long established link between Tredegar and Rhymney and the impact this will have on one of the most deprived and isolated areas in the county borough.

Ceri Mortimer, Clerk to the Gelligaer Community Council

Gelligaer Community Council strongly opposes the proposed reduction in revenue support for the evening bus service stagecoach 4/C9 as it will adversely affect 8,670 residents.

Bus Station Departure Charge Proposal

Consultation was undertaken with the three main bus operators providing local buses in the county borough over the proposal to introduce bus station charges. The proposed charge is 35p per departure and each response confirms that the charge will lead to a review of marginal bus routes and they will also seek to recover the cost of these charges on contracts operated on behalf of the Council, as the charges were not anticipated when the tender proposals were submitted.

The responses are summarised below:

Harris Coaches (response from John Harris – Managing Director)

Thank you for keeping us informed however, I've lost all confidence in the politicians taking notice of operators views, it is tough for them but it is more difficult for operators to maintain a quality level of service to our community with subsidies reduced year on year for nearly a decade and costs being increased at every turn.

Most if not all our services are at the margins and I believe are a benefit to our society, not only giving accessibility and inclusion to a growing underprivileged and helping combat loneliness but helping to support our struggling high streets.

We will have no choice but to off set any bus station charges by reduced service and avoiding bus stations where possible. The cost to Contract Services will obviously be passed on to the contracting authority i.e. The Council - Council tax payers money just goes round collecting transaction costs, how does that help anybody?

Experience shows that once a charge system is established the rate is quickly ramped up adding further to a decline in service provision.

The end game is the sick and old have free passes but no service to use them on.

New Adventure Travel (NAT Group) (response from Kevyn Jones, Managing Director)

In terms of the X38 and C18 it might well result in those services being lost. They are very marginal as it stands and adding additional cost may well kill them once and for all.

In terms of the subsidised services we would write to the subsidising authority (which is obviously also Caerphilly CBC) to ask for an uplift in subsidy to take account of the increase

in operating costs. I think this is reasonable given these additional costs were unforeseen. Dependant on the outcome of that process we may also need to look at the margins of the services affected and hand in routes which are no longer viable.

Stagecoach South Wales (response from Nigel Winter, Managing Director)

I refer to your letter of 20th December 2018, in which you refer to Caerphilly Council considering a proposal to introduce bus station charges and review of supported bus services, together with other budget measures, including the closure of public toilets.

The cost profile for operating buses in Caerphilly has included the zero cost for bus station departures. Any new cost has to be paid for from revenues. If revenues are not increasing through growth, then we shall have no option other than to increase fare and ticket prices to cover these new costs.

The closure of public toilets at transport hubs we hope may be avoided, although we accept that, in some instances, local shops may provide a convenient alternative - but only whilst the retailer is open.

The structure of local authorities across South East Wales is a matter for local government, but it cannot be ignored that sensible economies may be achieved through combining authority activity, gradually and sensibly, thus providing some economy of scale and savings that may be passed on to avoid cuts in services and new charges being applied.

Buses continue to be under pressure from passenger abstraction, from rail, social demographic change, socio economic, societal change towards working and shopping, with car usage increasing.

Rather than proposals to cut bus funding or introduce new charges, investment in buses and bus priority will help the industry to generate new custom – the new custom that will help pay for departure charges.

During 2018, service 25 (Caerphilly – Cardiff) was under scrutiny for punctuality reasons. Due to unpredictable road conditions and a lack of effective bus priority measures to help achieve punctual performance, this service sustained a 25% increase in costs to provide the resource to address the problem. Already a service

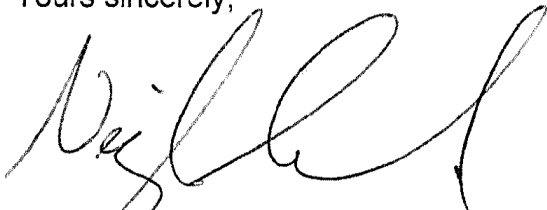
operating at direct cost level, additional costs of any justification will force a review of this service. This may also be said to be true of supported evening services, which are often poorly used Monday to Thursday. Additional costs will also force a review of these services.

We would far rather work with you on new bus priority measures that avoid operational cost increases, speed up the bus journey, and thus make buses more attractive to the user. Given clearly identified savings or passenger growth, then departure charges will be sustainable.

Encouraging bus use may mean introducing a car park charge at the Caerphilly Interchange. If this increases bus patronage, this will help us sustain new bus departure charges. The car park charge will help pay for maintenance of the car park, reducing the council's costs. At a time when air quality in the area of Caerphilly Interchange is poor, car deterrent measures must be a consideration. The electric vehicle bid with DfT was not made on the basis that Stagecoach provides the capital and then accepts a departure fee from its partner, who has made no ongoing commitment to support the electric vehicles.

I urge you to consider how capital may be spent on bus priority schemes that are consistent with developing patronage growth and halting cost increase due to reducing bus journey speeds. This is the opportunity to work together to reduce costs, increase passengers and be better placed to sustain new departure charges.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Winter', written in a cursive style.

Nigel Winter
Managing Director

Huw Morgan

Team Leader – Integrated Transport Unit