

From: vharvey
To: david.hopkin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk; pat.kingsnorth@leightonlinlade-tc.gov.uk;
paul.dodge@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk; paul.cook@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk;
james.gleave@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Sent: Sun, 5 Aug 2012 20:09

Dear Ms Kingsnorth and Cllr Hopkins,

South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth are requesting that the Partnership Committee funds an extra bus on Saturdays for the 36 (A and C) bus service that serves Linslade and Billington Park so that it runs a half hourly service on Saturdays instead of the present hourly service on a Saturday thus making it similar to the weekday service. This is in order to facilitate increased footfall in the town,

The weekday service for the 36 A and 36C which serves all of Linslade is a half hourly service consisting of one bus per hour travelling clockwise and one bus per hour travelling anti clockwise on a circular route around Linslade. This means that passengers can avoid lengthy and twisting journey all around Linslade if they live at one end of the route rather than the other end. On Saturdays the service is reduced to an hourly service that is only clockwise which could result in a resident of Linslade having to travel around most of Linslade before getting home.

This means that it can take a resident of Linslade half an hour to travel home by bus whereas it can take five or ten minutes by car. It is a very twisting route to a very tight timetable, meaning that the half hour journey can be an extremely uncomfortable experience, even more so with some of the more elderly buses. The service only runs hourly from 9.15am to 4.14pm.

It is so much less attractive than travelling to town on weekday into town by bus, meaning that people without a car might well avoid the town on a Saturday when it is at its most lively due to the transport situation. This service can just be considered as an alternative to a car on weekdays but on Saturdays it would be very surprising if it was seen as an alternative to using a car. People do not really have an alternative option to driving into Leighton Buzzard if they want to shop in Leighton Buzzard (unless they can cycle home with all their shopping) This is important as there is severe congestion down Soulbury road and Leighton Road on a Saturday morning which can make shopping in the Leighton Buzzard as opposed to Milton Keynes very unattractive. It is crucial to do everything to encourage car users who could use alternatives to travel by other modes in to reduce the traffic for those who need to drive.

Therefore the poor bus service on Saturday actively hinders people in Linslade from shopping in Leighton Buzzard on Saturdays and enjoying the market and the planned improved market on Saturday.

It seems odd that there is a huge amount of work going into promoting the market on Saturday when access from Linslade by bus is so much poorer than on weekdays.

The aim of this improvement to the Saturday bus service is to make sure that residents in Linslade can comfortably access the market on Saturday which is especially important with the emphasis of the Partnership Committee on supporting the town centre and the market,- and this is emphasised by the support of the Portas bid. At present people in Linslade are very cut off from the town centre at the weekend.

This would cost in the region of £300 per Saturday which would cost around £16,000 per annum. Due to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund successful bid, there is more money for promotion and this could really help make the increased service a success.

South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth also requesting the Partnership Committee to actively look into funding to proactively encourage all partners to share the costs and helping to look for funding into other bus services that link the estates to the town centre thereby linking residents to the town centre and the station, promoting and encouraging shopping locally rather travelling to other towns, and helping to cut congestion and supporting the station travel plan. This action will both help save money in other areas of Central Bedfordshire Council's spending and help meet other aims especially economic regeneration and supporting the town centre. This is in line with some of the ideas in the emerging Passenger transport strategy. The Partnership Committee can play a key role in helping the delivery of this joined up thinking and in providing the dynamism to make it happen. The first stage would be a report to look at the potential cost savings to the different services and the benefits to the town.

Savings on Social Care and health

Bus services are a vital link for many elderly people and the 20% of Leighton Linslade that do not have access to a car. Buses can form a quick and easy link from their homes to the town centre, - to the shops, services, and social and community facilities. Surveys on the Dash Direct showed many people using the bus just to pop into the town centre for shopping. They also show that people have given up their second car creating more disposable income to spend in the town. They play a major role in achieving Central Bedfordshire Council's aim of living longer/ living independently. If elderly people without a car can shop, and socialise and access the doctor etc. due to a good bus service then it is very likely that they will be able to live in their own homes for much longer before going into a care home or relying heavily on social services. A good bus service could save CBC considerable money if it delays the need for many elderly people for social services or care homes. There are costs to the Health service as many elderly people find it difficult to access hospital care due to deficiencies in the bus service and therefore need transport provided by the hospital. There are also issues of many elderly people driving for more years than is safe due to the problems that they would face without a car. Many elderly people

very isolated. I know that there have been complaints to the town council that elderly people cannot access the band concerts on Sundays due to lack of buses.

Savings on Congestion, and the Station Travel Plan.

The Dash Direct bus service has reduced traffic by 20% in the Grovebury road/ Billington road/ Leston road area below the predictions for business as normal. Congestion from Linslade down Soulbury road and along Leighton Road is a major problem on Saturday mornings for those wishing to access the town and this reduces the attractiveness of the town centre as a shopping offer compared with the ease of access to Milton Keynes and Bletchley due to the Linslade Western Bypass. There is congestion at various times in Leighton Buzzard and buses could play a role in helping reduce that congestion. Reductions of 10 or 20% in congestion can make a huge difference in the experience of visiting, working and living in Leighton Buzzard. School travel plans that were actively supported by improved buses could help reduce the severe congestion caused by the school run (the school run is responsible for 20% of peak time congestion) In particular traffic to Cedars in the morning causes severe congestion around the Wing Road and Leighton Road. Congestion and parking are an issue around the station, but for those living in parts of Linslade, in the East of Leighton Buzzard and along the Hockliffe road there are no buses that leave early enough to take them to the station, if they are commuting to work. The buses only start at 8.00am. Moreover the bus routes from Hockliffe street and the area around it terminate in the high street and do not even go direct to the station. The lack of early morning and evening buses mean that unless commuters cycle or walk a very long distance there is not an alternative to taking the car and parking at or near to the station. Those using the station later in the day will find the inconvenience of the bus stopping in the high street and having to change or a fifteen minute walk will make the car seem very attractive. Helping to deliver the station travel plan is an aim of the Partnership Committee. and a key aim of the station travel plan is to increase the number of people travelling to the station by bus and by cycling and walking.

Supporting the town Centre.

it is really important that in the new estates on the edge of the town and for many people who are already residents in Leighton Buzzard that it does not feel easier to drive to Bletchley or Milton Keynes than to go into Leighton Buzzard town Centre. The original aim of Dash Direct was to make sure that it was as easy for people in the new estates by Sandhills to hop on the bus into town as to get into a car and drive along the A505. The survey work on the Dash Direct shows that many people do use the bus several times a day to pop into town, both for shopping and for school runs. For them the town centre is just ten minutes away and with a day pass it is very economical and they do not have to worry about parking. If the town centre is really easy to get to, it is much more attractive for people to shop in, than travelling to Bletchley or Milton Keynes especially with the rising cost of petrol. These people are also leaving their car at home and so not adding to congestion.

Evidence base and shopping in town centre

The sustainable travel towns of Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester were a trial by the department of transport on the success of measures such as buses and cycling and promotion on reducing congestion and cutting carbon. Traffic was cut by 7% in the centre of Peterborough and Darlington, car use was reduced by 9% and bus use in Peterborough was increased by 35% and Worcester by 20%.

One of the most successful areas in the sustainable travel towns was where car use was replaced by walking cycling and bus use was for shopping trips. Shopping makes up 20% of all trips as opposed to commuting which only makes up 16% of all trips. Leisure makes 10% of all trips. This is according to the department for transport 2008 Carbon Pathways analysis. The savings in CO2 from the sustainable travel programmes was 27% nearly a third was due to the changes in travel in shopping trip. One of the exemplary success stories of the Trent Barton service in Nottinghamshire was the Mickelover bus. 16% of their new patronage was due to previous car owners who now used the bus for shopping. In other words shopping is an area where people are prepared to swap the car for another mode.

Opportunity with the Local Sustainable Transport Fund

There is the money within the Local Sustainable transport Fund to promote bus services but not to subsidise the actual service. The promotion is really crucial to increasing the usage of the bus service which both brings more elderly people into the town centre but also brings in paying customers which reduces the financial burden to the council.

Overall Support for funding improved bus services and actively supporting seeking more funding- doing a report to start the process.

As we have shown above good bus services play a role in saving money for social services and health services and supporting economic regeneration we would urge the partnership d committee to ask for a report on the savings and benefits to health and social care and economic regeneration and carbon saving that improving certain bus services could make and then looking at funding this partly from contributions from the different areas. This is in line with the work on the Passenger Transport strategy. However the Partnership Committee can play a critical role in taking this forward and their involvement can ensure a proactive delivery approach that will benefit the town centre.

yours sincerely
Victoria Harvey

Victoria Harvey
Coordinator South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth
and chair of Leighton Buzzard Station Travel Plan
www.southbedsfoe.co.uk

From: [Paul Dodge](#)
Sent: Monday, August 13, 2012 10:47 AM
To: <mailto:vharvey>
Subject: RE: partnership committee request funding for buses especially 36 on Saturday

Hi Victoria

I will seek latest figures for 36 on Saturdays (I have overall figures on our system).

As a an approximate figure, I suggested that I would expect an additional bus to cost in region of £300 per day. I am expecting pressures on prices for our subsidised bus services. The Government is also changing how BSOG is paid to bus operators next year, and I am waiting clarification on this. This may impact on prices.

Regards
Paul

Paul Dodge
Public Transport Manager
Central Bedfordshire Council

From: vharvey
Sent: 11 August 2012 07:10
To: Paul Dodge
Subject: Fwd: partnership committee request funding for buses especially 36 on Saturday

Dear Paul,
can you help with this see below, -- funding for a second 36 bus in Leighton Buzzard1
many thanks
Victoria

-----Original Message-----

From: Pat Kingsnorth
To: vharvey
CC: david.hopkin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk; paul.dodge@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk;
paul.cook@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk; james.gleave@centralbedfordhsire.gov.uk
Sent: Fri, 10 Aug 2012 11:36
Subject: RE: partnership committee request funding for buses especially 36 on Saturday

Dear Victoria

Thank you for your email in respect of the above. I have discussed your request with Cllr Hopkin and we feel we need much more information in respect of numbers of existing users, potential new users, costings and particularly demand/evidence of the need.

Kind regards.