

Central Bedfordshire Council
Passenger Transport Survey – Telephone Survey with Residents
Marked Up Questionnaire – September 2016

Please note that the figures may not always sum to 100% due to rounding.

SUBSIDIES

I'm going to ask you about bus subsidies: Currently 53% of bus services are subsidised by the Council and this costed tax payers about £1.2 million last year. The Council believes this is no longer affordable and is rethinking how bus transport is provided.

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: Subsidies are provided for bus routes which are no longer commercially viable for bus companies to run. A single journey can cost the Council up to £17.50. The Council is not obliged to do this, but historically they have chosen to. This is no longer affordable.

B1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should review the routes that are currently subsidised?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 21% |
| Tend to agree | 37% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 14% |
| Tend to disagree | 10% |
| Strongly disagree | 16% |
| Don't know | 2% |
| Refused | 0% |

The Council is deciding which routes should be subsidised and want the selection process to be fair and transparent. The criteria they propose to use are:

- **Accessibility – routes used by older or disabled people**
- **Geographical or network coverage**
- **Impact on congestion – routes that encourage the use of buses instead of cars**
- **Affordability – based on numbers of passengers likely to use a route**
- **Available alternatives – e.g. duplication of routes by community buses etc.**

B2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the criteria proposed are the right ones?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 39% |
| Tend to agree | 44% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 7% |
| Tend to disagree | 4% |
| Strongly disagree | 5% |
| Don't know | 1% |
| Refused | 0% |

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

There is a range of voluntary and community transport providers operating routes that might not be served by commercial operators and some of these are funded by the Council.

***INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY:* Examples include Dial-a-Ride services, Flittabus, Wanderbus, Ivel Sprinter and Roadrunner**

These services are popular with people living in rural areas, older and disabled people; and, many have indicated they would be prepared to pay more for these services.

The Council are proposing to introduce a competitive tender process for community transport providers whilst still providing financial support. They believe this will increase the number of voluntary and community services, as well as reduce the costs to the Council.

B3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to introduce a competitive tender process for community transport?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 28% |
| Tend to agree | 41% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10% |
| Tend to disagree | 10% |
| Strongly disagree | 11% |
| Don't know | 1% |
| Refused | 0% |

CONCESSIONS

Concessionary fares are discounted fares for older people, people with disabilities and people who are unemployed. 43,000 residents hold a bus pass and their journeys comprise 40% of all bus journeys in the area. Last year the Council spent nearly £2.4 million on concessional fares.

The Council is proposing to make changes – e.g. to the times people can use bus passes, the funding of travel aid, the processing of bus pass applications and bus pass renewals.

The Council are proposing time restrictions to the use of bus passes in line with the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Use would be limited to 9.30am to 11pm Monday to Friday, and any time on Saturday, Sunday or Bank Holidays – this reflects the times most people are already using bus passes.

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: There are no changes proposed to companion passes.

B4a

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council’s proposal to limit the times at which bus passes can be used?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 31% |
| Tend to agree | 26% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4% |
| Tend to disagree | 14% |
| Strongly disagree | 24% |
| Don’t know | 0% |
| Refused | 0% |

The Travel Aid scheme enables unemployed people to travel on buses at a discounted price. Under the proposals, the Council will no longer fund the scheme, although some bus companies may choose to offer discounted fares. The estimated saving is around £5,000 each year.

B4b

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council’s proposal to make £5,000 savings each year by ending funding for the Travel Aid scheme?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 18% |
| Tend to agree | 18% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 9% |
| Tend to disagree | 19% |
| Strongly disagree | 35% |
| Don’t know | 1% |
| Refused | 0% |

The Council wants to modernise the bus pass application service to make it more efficient. They are proposing by 2020 all people will apply for bus passes online.

B4c

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to make applying for a bus pass online-only by 2020?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 16% |
| Tend to agree | 17% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5% |
| Tend to disagree | 19% |
| Strongly disagree | 43% |
| Don't know | 0% |
| Refused | 0% |

Currently bus passes are renewed automatically every 5 years. To make the process more efficient, prevent fraud and prevent distress if the pass holder dies, the Council is proposing to stop the automatic renewal. Instead people will apply to renew bus passes every 5 years.

B4d

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Council's proposal to require residents to apply to renew their bus pass every 5 years?

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 48% |
| Tend to agree | 34% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5% |
| Tend to disagree | 6% |
| Strongly disagree | 7% |
| Don't know | 0% |
| Refused | 0% |

AWARENESS

B5

Before taking part in this survey, were you aware of the Council's proposed changes to bus services in Central Bedfordshire?

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Yes | 7% |
| No | 93% |
| Refused | 0% |

OTHER COMMENTS**C1**

At this point I'd like to ask if there are any other comments that you would like to make about the proposed changes to bus services in Central Bedfordshire, or if there are any alternative options you feel the Council should consider?

| | |
|---|-----|
| Generally agree with proposals/think they are a good idea | 58% |
| Generally disagree with proposals/don't think they will work/not a good idea | 1% |
| Disagree with cuts/no cuts should be made to transport services/maintain current provision of service | 3% |
| Buses are too expensive/cheaper bus fares needed | 3% |
| Disagree with making the elderly use online service for bus pass renewal | 4% |
| Disagree with restrictions on travel times for OAPs | 2% |
| Proposals will have a negative impact on the elderly/need to continue to subsidise/offer free transport for the elderly | 7% |
| Proposals will have a negative impact on disabled people/need to continue to subsidise/offer free transport for disabled | 3% |
| Proposals will have a negative impact on the unemployed/people on a low income/need to continue to subsidise/offer free transport for the unemployed/people on a low income | 2% |
| Free/subsidised travel should be extended to the young/buses should offer student discount | 2% |
| Unemployed people should have to pay for buses/don't think it's fair that unemployed people should have subsidised bus passes | 1% |
| Proposals will have a negative impact in rural areas/free/subsidised transport needed in rural areas to prevent isolation etc | 5% |
| Bus passes should be means tested | 1% |
| Too many empty buses/council needs to review which routes are underused | 1% |
| More buses needed/better timetable/more Sunday services | 6% |
| £5000 is not much of saving/not worth cutting travel subsidises | 1% |
| Savings should be made elsewhere | 1% |
| Other | 21% |
| Refused | 0% |

PROFILE

P1

How often do you use bus services in Central Bedfordshire?

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| More than once a week | 13% |
| Once a week | 6% |
| 2-3 times a month | 5% |
| Once a month | 6% |
| Less than once a month | 23% |
| Never | 48% |
| Refused | 0% |

P2

Which of the following do you currently use?

| | |
|---|-----|
| Bus pass | 37% |
| Commercial bus service (e.g. Stagecoach, Grant Palmer) | 63% |
| Voluntary bus services (e.g. Flittabus, Ivel Sprinter, Wanderbus, Roadrunner) | 6% |
| Dial-a-Ride services (e.g. Buzzer, South Beds Dial-a-Ride, Link-a-Ride) | 2% |
| Travel Aid | 0% |
| None of these | 19% |
| Refused | 0% |

P3

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Yes | 11% |
| No | 89% |
| Refused | 0% |