

## EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL

---

**Date:** 6 September 2021

**Title:** Consultation – Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

---

### Background

Oxfordshire County Council is currently consulting on the future of bus services in Oxfordshire <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxfordshire-bus-improvement-plan-2021>

In March 2021, the Government published a new [National Bus Strategy \(External link\)](#) which sets out a framework for how bus services can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and a vision for future improvements across England.

To meet this challenge, Oxfordshire County Council is working with the bus companies in our area to create a Bus Service Improvement Plan. This will involve developing bold plans for improving Oxfordshire's bus services and encouraging more people to use them.

Government has pledged £3 billion in funding across the country to help deliver these plans, and Oxfordshire is aiming to secure as much as it can of that funding.

We are excited about the opportunity this presents and want to ensure that our Improvement Plan reflects the views of Oxfordshire residents and those visiting or working in the county. We now want to find out what you think would improve our bus services and what would make you use them more\*

\*Information from the above link.

### Current Situation

The Town Council's Independent Parish Transport Representative has advised that, while the survey is primarily for individuals, Parish and Town Councils are being encouraged to provide their thoughts on this consultation which runs until 13<sup>th</sup> September.

As well as understanding what infrastructure improvements would encourage further bus use, the consultation also asks a question on new routes - these will be judged on the strength of the business case and the County Council has been urged to think boldly and consider cross-county services. The key consultation question where any Town Council response should focus on, is:

**From the following list, please order the improvements to bus services which might encourage you to use the bus more often (or start using the bus if you don't currently)**

Please rank the options in order of importance in making the most difference to your decision to use the bus or not.

1. Better information before you travel (e.g., a website for Oxfordshire bus information, an Oxfordshire bus map, etc.)
2. Better information during your journey (e.g., departure screens at bus stops, "the next stop is" screens in buses, etc.)
3. More reliable buses (e.g., through measures such as a bus priority at traffic lights, more bus lanes, etc.)
4. More frequent buses
5. More buses in the evening and at weekends
6. Simpler and better value fares
7. Accessibility improvements (e.g., better wheelchair access, raised kerbs at bus stops, etc.)
8. Better quality (e.g., cleaner bus shelters, more comfortable buses, etc.)
9. More environmentally friendly buses (e.g., electric buses)
10. New routes (e.g., to places that don't have buses, or direct links between places that don't currently have them).

The Parish Transport Representative has suggested that several new routes may be considered in the future but one key one which would affect Witney is to improve links with Cirencester, and Swindon. This is already on the list of strategic services and looks to represent the best possible opportunity to restore the former 64 service.

Members are also asked to consider any other bus services which should be mentioned, with justification of the requests, as part of a consultation response, should the Town Council wish to enter one. This may be the only opportunity to make requests for these services.

### **Environmental impact**

There should be no environmental impact from the contents of this report.

**Risk**

There is no perceived risk pertaining to this report.

**Financial implications**

There are no known financial implications.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Consider entering a Town Council response to this consultation based on the above questions and any potential new routes.