

West Sussex Bus Strategy Consultation:

Overview and proposals



The County Council is developing its new Bus Strategy for 2018-2026. This will outline our approach to and investment in local bus services and community transport.

The Bus Services Act 2017 enables us to work with bus companies and other partners in different ways to help sustain and improve bus services. We are also exploring ways to align our new Bus Strategy with the [West Sussex Plan](#).

The West Sussex Plan sets out how we will shape our services during 2017-2022.

It explains how we will focus on:

- Giving children and young people the best start in life
- Ensuring West Sussex is a prosperous place
- Communities will be strong, safe and sustainable
- We will support you in later life to remain independent
- We will be a council that works for our communities

The role of local bus services

Buses play an important role in many lives across West Sussex – providing travel for thousands of residents and visitors. Over 27 million passenger journeys were made on the West Sussex bus network in the last year and this number has steadily risen.

Bus services are vital to help many older, disabled and other vulnerable people. Without buses or community transport, many people would not be able to visit friends and family or access important services like shopping and medical appointments. Research has proven that the costs to society if these services could not be accessed would be extreme. It would also have a large impact on the local economy.

Travelling by bus instead of private car reduces traffic congestion and improves journey reliability. It also reduces carbon emissions linked to climate change.

How we currently support bus services

Supported routes

Most bus services in West Sussex are operated on a commercial basis by bus companies with no financial support from the County Council. However some routes would not be viable without local authority funding. Currently about 15% of bus services in West Sussex receive a subsidy from the County Council to help them run.

Free bus passes for older and disabled people

We have a statutory duty to administer and reimburse bus companies for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (free bus passes) in West Sussex. This enables older people to get free off peak travel on bus services. Disabled people get free bus travel starting in West Sussex at all times.

Infrastructure and information

We are responsible for road-side infrastructure such as hard standings and bus poles. (Bus shelters are managed by the local District, Borough or Parish Council. Bus flags and timetables are owned by the relevant bus operator.)

We coordinate the provision of real time passenger information screens throughout the county. We also offer funding and support to the Traveline journey planning website and helpline.

Community transport

We provide grant funding to a number of Community Transport schemes operating for residents who cannot access public buses. These include dial-a-rides, volunteer car schemes and community buses.

What we want to achieve

Our proposals for the new Bus Strategy

OBJECTIVES

West Sussex will be a place where:

- Bus services are punctual, reliable and accessible
 - Bus users can plan, book and pay for travel using the latest technology
 - Bus services give people a viable alternative to being a car owner
 - Bus services allow older people to continue to live independently
 - Bus operators and their services give a consistently good level of quality for users across the county
 - Bus travel is affordable for users
 - Air quality is better as a consequence of investment in cleaner buses as opposed to cars
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PRIORITIES

This means we will:

- Give buses priority over other travel modes when congestion occurs
 - Implement cross ticketing and easy payment systems
 - Promote the use of latest clean engine technology
 - Prioritise investment in good accessible bus infrastructure for bus users
 - Work with property developers to design developments to incorporate buses as a priority with suitable infrastructure (such as bus stops, shelters and real time information)
 - Work with all tiers of Local Government in seeking funding for prioritised local bus and community transport services
 - Explore whether it makes sense to use our own vehicles to provide services working with Community Transport where appropriate
 - Work with bus operators to provide affordable bus fares for younger people
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How you can get involved

We would like to know your views on the proposals for the new Bus Strategy and if there is anything else you think we should include.

Complete our online questionnaire at: www.westsussex.gov.uk/buses

Or call **01243 642105** to request a paper copy, or ask at your local library. (Alternative formats available by request).

You can also provide your comments or feedback by calling the telephone number above, by emailing buses@westsussex.gov.uk or by writing to:

Bus Strategy Consultation, Transport Bureau, West Sussex County Council, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

The closing date for this consultation is 6 June 2018