



Flintshire County Council

Bus Network Review

Public Consultation 2018

The Councils Current Position

More than 55 bus routes operate across Flintshire on a daily basis. These journeys are operated by private bus companies which either run commercial bus services or routes subsidised by Flintshire County Council.

Under the Transport Act (1985), bus operators are free to operate bus services on any route that they consider to be commercially viable, which means that the costs for running the services are covered by the fares collected from passengers on the route or by concessionary travel reimbursement in lieu of the fares.

Commercial routes are operated solely by bus companies with no input from the local authority on route direction or financial support, whereas subsidised routes are those funded wholly, or partially, by the Council. This is required to ensure that public transport is available to those living in areas where a commercial service does not run or is not financially viable. Around 60% of bus services in Flintshire are operated commercially and 40% are subsidised.

There is no statutory duty upon the Council to provide local bus services, or fund any form of public transport, but the Authority does have a statutory duty under the 1985 and 2000 Transport Acts to keep the bus network under review, and intervene where it feels appropriate.

At present, Flintshire County Council subsidises 24 bus routes through either standalone contracts or agreements with commercial operators to provide services that are not commercially viable, such as early morning, evening, via certain villages etc. This is at a cost of £1,068,352 per annum with some journeys being subsidised to the cost of £6 per passenger journey. This is not sustainable and, with changing demands on public transport, may no longer be fit for purpose.

Proposals

Central to transport in Flintshire is the bus network, which despite declining patronage remains an important public transport mode in the County, in terms of number of passengers carried and kilometres covered. Buses are key to providing access to the main hubs and increasingly for ensuring access to areas of economic activity, employment centres and new developments.

However, with increasing car ownership, there is pressure on maintaining the current levels of service with an increasing funding gap between network operating costs and passenger fare revenue. Coupled with this, the Council is facing increasing pressure on budget and resources, but with increasing demand and expectations from local communities.

Historically, the subsidised bus routes in Flintshire have been established on a piecemeal basis, sometimes without real justification or business case for support. North East Wales has been subject to changes in land use and employment over time, which in turn means that the way transport demand and supply is distributed may have changed. Additionally, more recently, there have been a number of changes to the commercial bus network by bus operators, which has impacted on communities and left potential gaps in service provision.

While some Local Authorities have stopped subsidising bus travel altogether, we are not doing that. However, we need to ensure an effective and integrated bus network into the future, and services must be sustainable, affordable and meet the changing and prioritised needs of our residents.

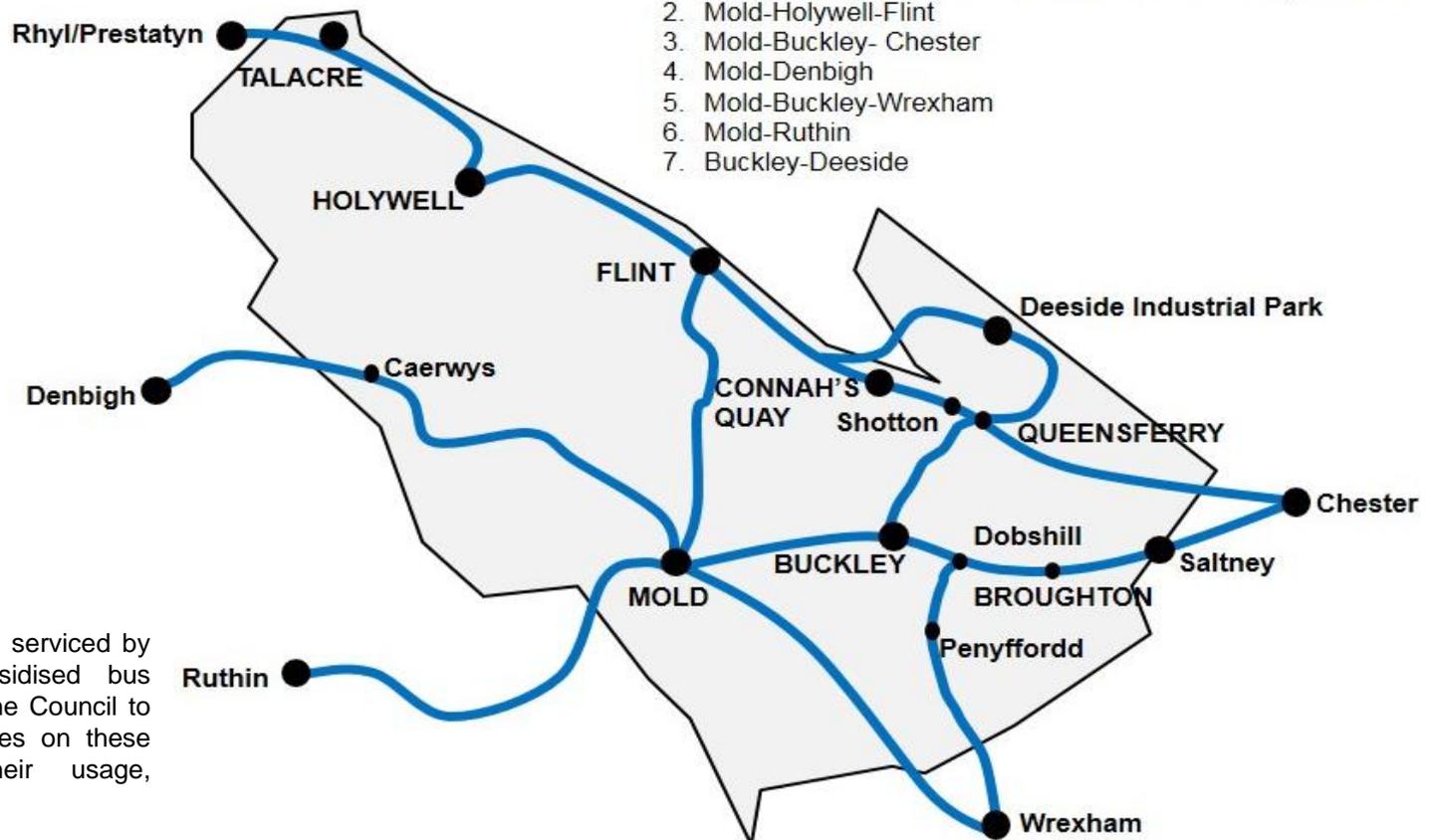
There is therefore a need to carry out a comprehensive review of the network and consider the commercial network and the supported network as a whole to ensure that it best reflects the current travel patterns of passengers and meets the evolving demand for transport to new developments.



The review will consider the current supported bus network and how best to prioritise increasingly limited public funding where there is most need and ensure that service delivery is consistent, fair and equitable across the County. Accordingly, the review will include areas of the County not currently served by public transport and consider the current commercial provision of services to key centres and identify any gaps where there is an existing or future need.

A review of the bus network was undertaken in April 2015, which established a strategic core network of bus routes throughout the County and on some cross-boundary corridors to link passengers to key destination hubs for access to education, employment, shopping, health, social and leisure opportunities. The service model adopted is based on a hierarchical network approach with the development of high demand and quality links to key centres or hubs in particular.

Strategic Core Bus Network



Currently, these corridors are serviced by both commercial and subsidised bus routes. It is the intention of the Council to maintain the subsidised routes on these corridors, but review their usage, frequency and efficiency.

Subsidised Routes on the Core Network

Service	Route Description	Details of subsidy provided
1/X1/2	Ruthin - Cadole - Gwernymynydd - Mold - Chester	Fully supported service (under contract to Denbighshire County Council)
3	Mold - Buckley - Penyffordd - Broughton - Chester	Commercial service with FCC support via Penyffordd & Broughton Retail Park
4/4A	Mold - Buckley - Hawarden - Saltney - Chester	Commercial service with FCC support on evenings journeys after 1800 M-S & Sundays on Service 4 via Hawarden & Broughton Village
11A	Chester - Mold - Holywell - Prestatyn - Rhyl	Commercial service with FCC support on evening journeys to Mold and Rhyl and for early morning journeys
14	Mold - Rhydymwyn - Nannerch - Caerwys - Denbigh	Fully supported service
28, 28A, 28X, S28	Flint - Mold - Buckley - Penyffordd - Hope - Wrexham	Commercial service with FCC support for early morning / evening journeys
Deeside Shuttle (D1, D2, D3)	Flint - Connah's Quay - Shotton - Queensferry - Deeside Industrial Park	Fully supported service
X4	Mold - Buckley - Ewloe - Hawarden - Broughton - Chester	Commercial service with FCC support for service
5/5A	Mold - Buckley - Ewloe - Queensferry - Deeside Industrial Park - Ellesmere Port	Fully supported service

Consultation Review

We are holding this consultation to let you know how the current network may change and we are asking your opinion on the best way forward with the provision of transport services within your area. This is your chance to have your say on how best to spend the bus subsidy budget available and share your views.

To help with this, and ensure that we understand the best option for your local community, we have divided the authority into four geographical areas highlighting the main hubs within those areas either for onward travel on the core bus network or access to education, employment, shopping, health, social and leisure opportunities.

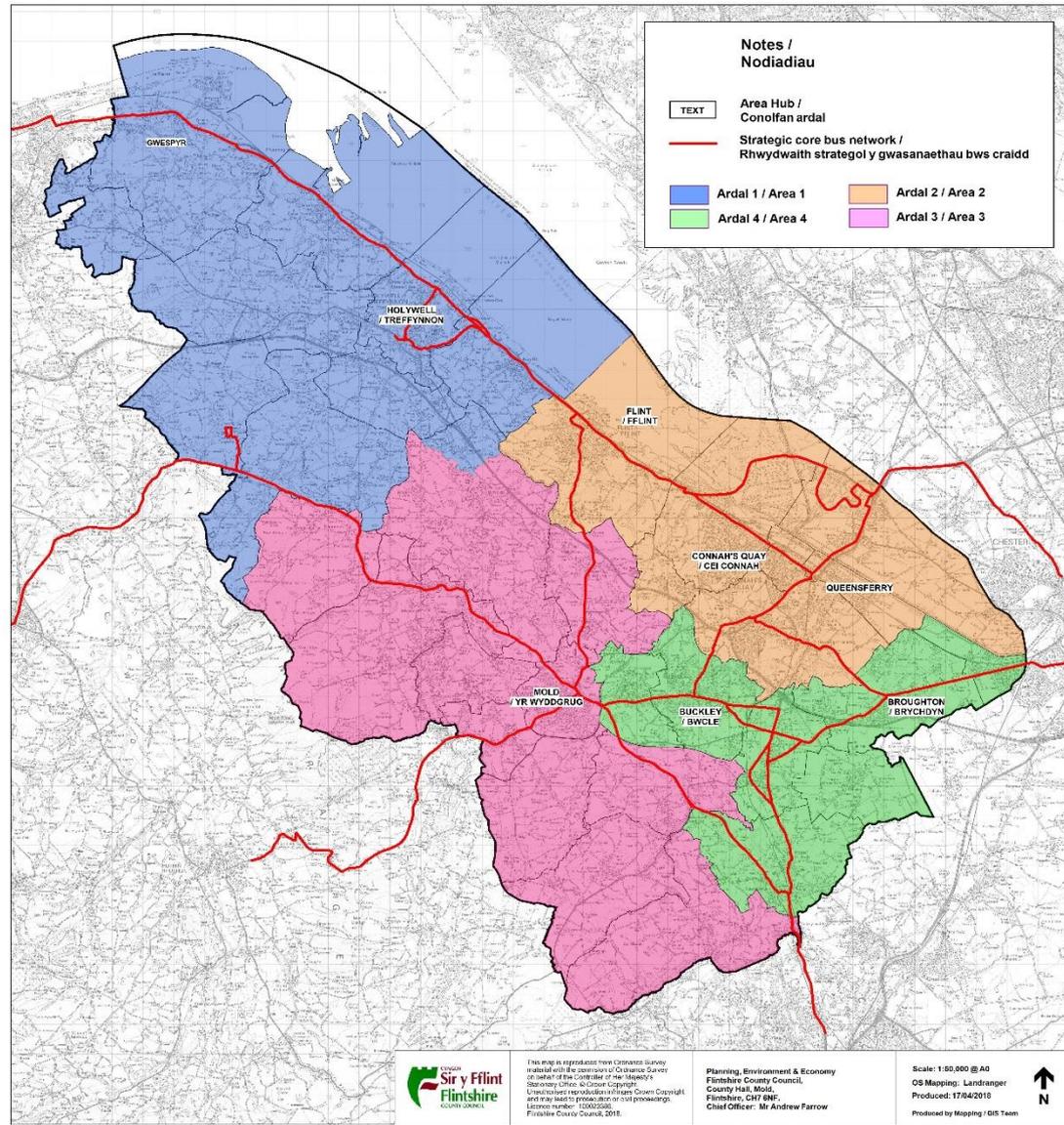
The Geographical Areas are:

Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4
Hub: Holywell; Gwespyr	Hub: Flint; Connaugh Quay; Queensferry	Hub: Mold	Hub: Buckley; Broughton
<p>Includes: Holywell, Bagillt, Greenfield, Mostyn, Rhewl, Penyffordd, Trelawnyd, Trelogan, Gwaenysgor, Whiford, Carmel, Lloc, Gorsedd, Pantasaph, Gwespyr, Axton, Gronant, Llanasa, Talacre, Ffynnongroyw, , Pentre Halkyn, Brynford, Milwr, Babell, Caerwys, Afonwen, Ysceifiog, Lixwm, Rhes-y-Cae,</p>	<p>Includes Flint, C'Quay, Queensferry, Wepre, Shotton, Aston, Mancot, Pentre, Sandycroft, Deeside Industrial Park (D.I.P.), Garden City, Sealand, Northop Hall, Hawarden, Ewloe, Oakenholt, Flint Mountain</p>	<p>Includes: Mold, Cilcain, Rhydymwyn, Northop, Sychdyn, Nannerch, Pantymwyn, Gwernaffield, Gwernymynydd, Cadole, Nercwys, Treuddyn, Llanfynydd, Ffrith, Cymau, Rhydtalog, Leeswood, Pontybodkin, Coed Talon, Pontblyddyn, Halkyn, Rhosesmor,</p>	<p>Includes: Buckley, Mynydd Isa, Bryn-y-Baal, Dobshell, Drury, Burntwood, Pentrerobin, Penymynydd, Penyffordd, Padeswood, Alltami, New Brighton, Bretton, Broughton, Saltney, Saltney Ferry, Higher Kinnerton, Hope, Caergwrle</p>



The Geographical Areas - Map

Within your area we want you to consider the demand for public transport and which of our proposed options would best suit the needs of the community.



Proposed Options and Implications



Option 1 - Stop subsidising bus routes completely

- » This option would see all FCC revenue support for bus subsidies removed and leave only commercial bus services operating on routes that are financially viable. Commercial bus operators can introduce, withdraw or change their bus services at any time with no consultation with the Local Authority simply by giving 56 days' notice to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.
- » The Local Authority has no control regarding the operation of commercial bus services and has little or no input into the commercial transport network. Commercial bus services would operate where bus operators believe a profitable operation can be run, and they are free to set the routes, timetables and fares as they see fit according to service demand.
- » Under this option, rural areas and less populated areas of the County, including some larger housing estates, would not benefit from any bus service and some evenings and Sunday services may be reduced or withdrawn.
- » There are also implications for the revenue grant support (Bus Service Support Grant (BSSG)) received from Welsh Government, which exists to supplement local authorities' own expenditure.
- » In the future, it is expected that BSSG allocations, from April 2019, will be determined to reflect in part local authorities' own expenditure on supporting bus and community transport services, which means that any reductions or removal of a local authority's own revenue support would result in the reduction or removal of the grant.
- » Statutory school transport services for eligible pupils would continue to be provided under this option.

Option 2 – Do Nothing

- » This option would leave the current arrangements for supporting the existing bus services in place as they are currently, but may require fares to be reviewed and some minor timetable amendments to improve reliability and increase passenger numbers.
- » Subsidised bus services would continue to be provided on existing routes at current frequencies, but would not benefit those areas where a service does not currently operate.
- » There would be no alternative support should a commercial operator amend, reduce or withdraw their services in the future.
- » Additionally, this option would not take into account any recent changes made to the commercial network or longer-term developments and changes in land use or economic activity.
- » Statutory school transport services for eligible pupils would continue to be provided under these option.

Proposed Options and Implications



Option 3 – Support the core bus network and implement local travel arrangements (LTAs) in communities not on the core network.

- » This option would involve maintaining the core bus network at an affordable level through Quality Partnerships with the bus operators and linking communities to area hubs utilising smaller vehicles such as minibuses which operates just like a regular bus service running along a fixed route and to a scheduled timetable.
- » This service would be less frequent than a standard bus service and would require passengers to adapt their travel needs to suit.
- » The smaller vehicle would better suit itself to rural transport for access via country roads.
- » Statutory school transport services for eligible pupils would continue to be provided under this option and concessionary travel passes would be accepted on all services.

Option 4 -Support the core bus network and provide a demand responsive service for communities not on the core network.

- » This option would involve maintaining the core bus network at an affordable level through Quality Partnerships with the bus operators and linking communities not on the core bus network through a “ring-and-ride” style service, where a vehicle can be pre-booked on a demand responsive basis for transport to a main hub.
- » Unlike current taxi arrangements, this would not be a trip for the individual and other passengers will be picked up and dropped off on a shared service, for which a fee is chargeable.
- » Transport will be provided when you require, you would not have to wait for a scheduled service.
- » All of the area would have access to this form of transport. Currently, concessionary travel passes are not eligible on “ring-and-ride” services.
- » The authority currently operates a chargeable “Dial-a-Ride” service for individuals registered to the scheme. This is provided for those needing to attend local medical appointments. This service will continue and be promoted in areas effected by bus service changes.

Subsidised Routes Partially and Not on the Core Network

Service	Route Description	Operates on core network	Details of subsidy provided
8	Sealand Manor - Queensferry - Shotton - Northop Hall - Northop - Mold	Partially	Fully supported service
9/X9	Mold - Northop Hall - Connah's Quay - Queensferry - Chester/Wrexham	Partially	Fully supported service
12	Connah's Quay - Shotton - Deeside Community Hospital - Queensferry - Mancot - Sandycroft - Chester	Partially	Commercial service with FCC support for to serve Mancot & Sandycroft
18	Flint-Bagillt-Holywell-Greenfield-Mostyn-Maes Pennant-Penyffordd-Gwespyr-Talacre-Prestatyn/Rhyl	Partially	Commercial service with FCC support to serve Flint Cornist, Penyffordd (Holywell), Rhyl and Prestatyn (recharged to DCC)
6, 6A	Mold-Gwernymynydd-Cadole-Gwernaffield-Pantymwyn	No	Commercial service with FCC support for Mold Campus and other peak journeys
14A	Pen-y-Maes-Holywell-Carmel-Gorsedd-Caerwys-Denbigh	No	Fully supported service
14C	Pen-y-Maes-Holywell-Carmel-Gorsedd-Cilcain-Rhydymwyn-Mold	No	Fully supported service
21A/B	Buckley local service (Southdown - Bryn Awelon - Precinct Way - Medical Centre - Railway Station)	No	Fully supported service
22, 22A	Holway-Holywell-Brynford-Holywell-Pen-y-Maes	No	Fully supported service
23	Greenfield-Holywell-Holywell Community Hospital	No	Fully supported service
40	Mold - Nercwys - Treuddyn - Llanfynydd - Ffrith - Cymau - Abermorddu - Wrexham	No	Fully supported service
126	Holywell-Milwr-Pentre Halkyn-Halkyn-Rhosesmor-Mold	No	Commercial service with FCC support for some service
63	Higher Kinnerton-Hope-Caergwrle-Treuddyn-Nercwys-Mold	No	Fully supported service



Consultation Process

Your feedback will help us decide on the best transport option for your area and these proposals will then be presented to the Council cabinet Committee where a decision on the future of bus subsidy will be decided.

While there will be issues and challenges in developing a new supported bus network to meet the core needs of Flintshire's residents, communities and stakeholders, we believe that it is possible to develop a sustainable and integrated network of supported transport services, building on a strong, stable commercial bus network and prioritised funding of services by the Council.

Consultation timescale:

- » **Public consultation begins: April 2018**
- » **Public Engagement 'drop in' events: April & May 2018**
- » **Public consultation ends: 3rd June 2018**
- » **Feedback is reviewed and proposals made on preferred transport option for each area: June 2018**
- » **Proposals presented to the Councils Cabinet Committee for consideration: July 2018**
- » **Any proposed changes implemented: 1st October 2018**

Please complete the following questions:

Which geographical area are you commenting on
(if more than one please fill out a separate questionnaire)

Area 1

Area 2

Area 3

Area 4

What is your postcode? _____

Please indicate your age range:

18 years and under

19 – 25 years

26 – 49 years

50 – 59 years

60+

Prefer not to state

Please indicate your gender:

Male

Female

Prefer not to state

What is the purpose of your travel?:

Work

Education

Shopping

Access to services

What services? _____

Access to other public transport

Medical appointments

Social Events

Other _____

Where are your destinations?

Are you affected by the following mobility issues

Need wheelchair when leaving the house

Unable to walk more than 200 metres without difficulty or assistance

Unable to use conventional public transport

Other (please explain) _____

How often do you use public transport?

- Daily
- Weekdays Only
- 2 – 3 times week
- At least once a week
- At least once a month
- Several times a year
- Never

When do you require public transport?

- Before 9am
- Between 9am and 4pm
- After 4pm
- After 7pm
- Saturday
- Sunday
- Various
- Never

If you currently use a bus service, which route do you use and where is your nearest bus stop?

Bus service Number _____

Bus Stop _____

Bus service Number _____

Bus Stop _____

Bus Service Number _____

Bus stop _____

Do you currently make use of Flintshire's 'ring and ride' service?

- Yes
- No
- I will if needed

Do you make use of other community transport arrangements provided in the community?

- Yes
- No
- I will if needed

Please specify _____

Having read the accompanying documentation, which option do you recommend for your community?

Option 1 – Stop all subsidised bus routes that operate in the county on core / non-core network.

Option 2 - Continue to support the current subsidised routes only.

Option 3 - Support subsidised routes on the core network and **implement** local travel arrangements to bring passengers from communities to designated hubs

Option 4 - Support subsidised routes on the core network and **implement** a demand responsive ‘ring and ride’ service so bring passengers from communities to designated hubs

Return to: Flintshire County Council, Alltami Depot, Mold Road, Alltami, CH7 6LG or email to streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk