

My name is Adam Boyden and I am a Mendip District Councillor for College ward in Frome, which is served by the 267 bus route. I am concerned that losing the 267 evening bus service would affect people in Frome and the villages to the north, and have worked with the Frome and Villages Bus User Group and other councillors to encourage residents and councillors to respond to the consultation.

Firstly I would like to thank your Council for supporting a service that connects people largely living in Somerset with places they need to get to, largely in Bath, particularly since Somerset County Council stopped supporting it in 2011.

Secondly I would like to make the case for you to retain the subsidy. Your budgets are under pressure, so why should B&NES continue to subsidise the service?

Well, one reason is that the evening service helps the B&NES economy, by bringing Somerset residents into Bath to spend money into the evening, and it makes bus travel in the day more attractive overall in the first place, as they can stay late and return on the same ticket. The subsidy costs B&NES £19,000 a year and £1.89 per passenger trip. Bath Tourism estimates that the average day visitor to Bath spends £34 per day. There are many residents, and tourists staying in B&Bs and hotels along the route, who visit Bath by bus for the day. The 267 evening service has 10,084 passenger trips a year, and 71% of passengers (on that evening in February) got the bus for 'leisure or entertainment' trips – passengers on this service could therefore be generating over £243,000 for the Bath economy. So cutting the service could have an economic impact on Bath.

Another reason is environmental, in that the 267 evening service brings people into Bath (and earlier in the day) without adding to car travel and congestion, air pollution in Air Quality Management Areas, carbon emissions, or parking problems in residential streets. Your council is considering investing heavily in further Park and Ride capacity to reduce traffic in the city centre, including at Odd Down on the 267 route. Cutting the 267 could therefore increase traffic and the council's costs of mitigating its effects, in other budgets.

A third reason is the social impact of cutting the evening service, which would mostly affect the people who rely on the bus, who do not have a car, and are more likely to be women, older people over 60 and younger people under 20, and those on lower incomes. Lower paid workers in pubs and restaurants who rely on the 267 to get home would be cut off. Retaining the service would therefore help protect the more vulnerable groups of people. Ending the service would also increase the 'rural isolation' of villages around Bath who would have no public transport to or from Bath at all in the evenings. Frome

does have a railway station but the train is more expensive, and is unlikely to be a viable option for villagers. Frome and the main three villages are expanding further with new housing development, because they are close to Bath and are served by bus routes. So I fully support the responses to the consultation from Frome Town Council, Beckington and Rode Parish Councils, who ask B&NES to continue the service.

Overall, cutting the 267 evening buses may have an economic impact on Bath's economy, it would go against the council's own strategy of reducing car travel, could affect traffic and air quality, and increase the need and costs related to Park & Ride sites. It would have a social impact on people who rely on the bus, and increase the 'rural isolation' in local villages. These impacts costs and benefits need to be assessed further.

Thirdly, although these are clear reasons for B&NES to support the service alone, I hope your council will talk to Somerset, Mendip and the parish councils to help retain this important service, through 'match funding' if necessary. Frome Town Council are considering this very issue on Wednesday, and I and others will report back.

Thank you,
Adam Boyden
Mendip District Councillor, Frome College ward