

My name is Linda Oliver and I am both a Mendip District Councillor and a Somerset County Councillor, and represent a number of villages, which will be impacted by further cuts to the 267 bus services.

Adam Boyden has outlined three good reasons for continuing your support for this bus services, the economic benefit for businesses in Bath, the positive environmental impact of reducing the need to travel by private car, and the social harm of removing a service upon which a small, but needy, user group rely on.

You have also heard from Tracey Harding, who asks that affected councils be given the chance to fully consider the implications of this before any decisions are made. Tracey points out that the parish councils have not been included in the consultation, and I can confirm that neither have local district and county councillors, or indeed Mendip District Council. So we have not really had enough time to fully consider the issue.

I have spoken to Tracy Aarons, Deputy Chief Executive of Mendip District Council and she has asked Anna Blackburn in the planning policy team to consider the implications, but this will take time.

3 of 16 primary villages within Mendip are affected by the 267-bus service, namely Beckington, Rode and Norton St Philip.

As such, according to the Local Plan, they should not be subject to any cuts in their public transport service. Moreover due to their close proximity to Bath these three villages are extremely popular targets for housing developers, and as a result all three are significantly over performing in their completions and consents granted for new housing.

Cuts to bus services at a time of such disproportionate growth in housing numbers does not seem appropriate.

Equally important is the positive impact this housing growth could have on the financial viability of the bus service. The Mendip planning policy team will be able to provide data on this housing growth to assist you in your decision-making.

In the meantime I would recommend that the neighbouring authorities of BANES and Somerset liaise and agree a way forward where sufficient funding is made available to continue the service in the short-term. This short -term fix would provide the time to: -

1. Organise a more comprehensive consultation.
2. Carry out a more detailed survey of users.
3. Do a full cost/benefit analysis.
4. Approach local parish councils for potential funding support.
5. And Develop a plan to advertise and promote the service.

What I can promise is that in Adam Boyden and myself you have two very active councillors who will work hard to get the support of their respective local councils if the survey of local users shows it to be justifiable.

Thank you

19th September 2016