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For immediate release

Public asked to help shape new flexible, on-demand bus service

Wiltshire Council has been awarded £1.2m of Department for Transport (DfT) funding to launch an improved flexible, on-demand bus service in the Pewsey Vale area – and wants to hear from people on what the new service should look like.

Flexible, on-demand bus services do not run to a set timetable like usual buses. Instead, they enable people to phone or book a bus service via an app, to take them anywhere within the service area at a time to suit them. App users will be able to book their journey, see in real-time when the vehicle will arrive and make payment. For people who cannot or do not wish to use the app, telephone booking and on-bus payment will also be available.

In the case of this new service, the area it will cover takes in much of Pewsey Vale; from the eastern edge of Devizes, north to Beckhampton and Marlborough, and east to Collingbourne Ducis, Shalbourne and Froxfield, including Pewsey, Burbage, Great Bedwyn and Everleigh. This rural service would provide links to Devizes, Ludgershall and Tidworth, so people can take bus services to other towns.

Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: “This is a hugely exciting opportunity for people in the Vale of Pewsey, as the new service will help to improve connectivity across the towns and villages in the area.

“Unlike a conventional bus, which has a fixed route, timetable and stopping points, on demand buses allow people to book using an app and make journeys where they want, when they want; it’s a bit like an Uber-style service for buses.

“But it’s really important that this service is designed around the needs of passengers and our communities, and that’s why we’re asking people to take our survey to let us know what they’d like to see from the service.

“This new service supports our business plan aim to have vibrant, well-connected communities, particularly in rural areas, so I’d urge anyone in the area to take part in the survey so we can design a new service that meets the needs of the community.”

The funding for the scheme has been granted to the council through the DfT's Rural Mobility Fund, which encourages local authorities to trial on-demand bus services in rural areas.

The survey runs from Wednesday 25 May to Friday 15 July, and people can have their say and find out more, including a map of the service area, at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/transport-public-transport-bus

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