

Requested information

I am gathering information on bus and public transport provision as part of the Save our Buses campaign, which maps cuts to bus services across the country. We know that the Government has made deep cuts to local authority budgets, and that this is having an effect on the provision of local bus services. We would like to gather a national picture of bus cuts, so that we can explain to central Government exactly how their decisions are having an impact across the country.

My questions are as follows (in each case I am only after the information for your authority):

1. What is the agreed total budget for supported bus services in the fiscal year 2018/19

£1,110,187

2. What was the total spend for supported bus services in the fiscal year 2017/18?

£1,145,703 (provisional - some income still to be accounted from gross cost contracts)

3. What was the total spend for supported bus services in the fiscal year 2016/17?

£1,170,261

Note: This refers to the Department for Transport's definition of a supported bus service as: "one where a local transport authority has invited tenders for the operation of a service (not e.g. seats on a bus or subsidised tickets etc), and a contract exists as a result of that tender". Please, exclude extra sources of funding such as Section 106/developer funding, Community Infrastructure Levy, local authority staffing and publicity, RTPi expenditure and revenue, the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), Local Education Authority funding for home to school transport, NHS-funded non-emergency patient transport, social services transport, voluntary transport and other central and national government grants or income streams.

The spend reported above (Q2 and Q3) includes all direct payments to operators. These payments include in some cases a separate element of BSOG where the contract pre-dated the devolution of BSOG to LTAs in January 2014. For contracts in place at that time the operators received a direct extra payment from the Authority to offset the withdrawal of the right to claim BSOG for those tendered services. Over time, as contracts have been replaced and retendered, this has been absorbed into contract prices.

4. How many and which supported routes are likely to have cuts in services in the fiscal year 2018/19 (for example loss of weekend or evening services)?

A number of services are currently out to tender for replacement in September 2018; the tender specifications include some options that would reduce services, but we cannot speculate as to which services will change until such time as the Council makes a decision on which contracts to award in the light of the bids that are still to be submitted.

One change that will take effect from September 2018 is that service 179 will lose late evening (2300 ex Bath) journeys that operate on Friday and Saturday only. These are not being tendered directly, although options are included in the tender round that would allow replacement journeys to be made using an extension of other direct services.

5. How many and which supported routes have had cuts in services in the fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18 (for example loss of weekend or evening services), listed for each year?

Bath & North East Somerset Council Request for Information

We provided details in December 2016 covering reductions in services in 2016/17 under FOI reference 1975/16.

See response to Q7 below for service changes in 2017/18

6. How many and which supported routes are likely to be completely withdrawn in the fiscal year 2018/19?

A number of services are currently out to tender for replacement in September 2018; but we cannot speculate as to whether the Council will award contracts for all the services involved until such time as the Council makes a decision on which contracts to award in the light of the bids that are still to be submitted.

A contract for service 701 expires in June 2018. The service operates during University terms only and is fully funded by passenger fares and a contribution from Bath Spa University. From October 2018 we expect that the service will be operated "commercially" by the operator with a direct contribution from the University and there will no longer be a contractual relationship with B&NES Council.

7. How many and which supported routes have been completely withdrawn in the fiscal years 2016/17 and 2017/18, listed for each year?

See Q5 above and the attachment for details of services completely withdrawn in 2016/17

2017/18

Services RA3 and RA4 operated under contract on school days only to Ralph Allen School until July 2017. From September 2017 the two services were combined and operated commercially.

In May 2017 the Council ceased the contract for evening journeys on service 267 (Bath-Frome). From that time the journeys were operated commercially with a reduced de minimis contributions from B&NES, and contributions from other authorities and parishes (in Somerset)

8. How many and which of the previously supported routes have been taken on commercially?

See 7 above

Our campaign also seeks to promote examples of councils which have protected bus services, sometimes in innovative ways. Please do feel free to share any information you feel is relevant on how your council has protected bus services.