

**Appendix 3: Review of subsidised local bus services  
Summary of Responses from Community & Town Councils and other  
community groups**

<b>Consultees (responded)</b>	<b>Not responded</b>
<p>Bargoed Town Council            Bedwas, Trethomas &amp; Machen            Community Council            Blackwood Town Council            Caerphilly Town Council            Darran Valley Community Council            Draethen, Waterloo &amp; Rudry Community            Council            Gelligaer Community Council            Fochriw &amp; Pentwyn Residents            Association            Maesycwmmmer Community Council            Nelson Community Council            Rhymney Community Council            Risca West Community Council</p>	<p>Aber Valley Community Council            Argoed Community Council            Llanbradach &amp; Pwllypant Community            Council            New Tredegar Community Council            Penyrheol, Trecenydd and Energlyn            Community Council            Risca East Community Council            Van Community Council</p> <p>Aber Valley Partnership            Abertysswg Communities First            Partnership            Cefn Hengoed &amp; Hengoed Partnership            Crosskeys &amp; Pontywaun Community            Partnership            Crumlin Community Partnership            Deri &amp; Groesfaen Community            Partnership            Fochriw Welfare &amp; Community            Partnership            Glan-y-nant &amp; Tir-y-berth Partnership            Graig-y-Rhacca Partnership            Greater Bargoed Partnership            Llanbradach &amp; Pwllypant Partnership            Board            Lower Sirhowy Valley Communities            Partnership            Maesycwmmmer Partnership            Nelson Village Partnership            New Tredegar Communities Partnership            Newbridge Partnership            Oakdale Community Partnership            Pengam &amp; Communities Partnership            Penllwyn Communities Partnership            Pontlottyn Communities First Partnership            Trinant, Pentwyn &amp; Cwmnantgwynt            Partnership            Ty Sign &amp; Local Communities            Partnership            Van Communities Partnership            Ystrad Mynach Community Partnership</p>

	<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	Darran Valley Community Council  Rhymney Community Council	Both Councils are extremely disappointed to see a proposed reduction and withdrawal of service both down the Valley to Ystrad Mynach and the hospital site, as well as the service between Bargoed and Merthyr Tydfil. Both Councils feel these proposed changes will see increased levels of isolation, social and economic deprivation, worsen lifestyle choices, and result in further barriers for those of working age seeking employment in neighbouring areas. Both Councils believe these changes will impact equally across all age groups. Therefore both Councils request that due consideration be given to the already identified impacts of these proposed changes prior to any negative decision being made.	There is a high cost in providing the current level of service compared with the number of passengers travelling. The evening revised timetables will be based on retaining the journeys that carry the most passengers to minimise the impact, but it is accepted that the reduction in service will cause difficulty for some passengers. The changes to services 1 and 4 in the evenings will be looked at together and will be as evenly spaced as possible between Rhymney, Pontlottyn and Bargoed to at least maintain an hourly gap between these communities.
2	Darran Valley Community Council  Rhymney Community Council	Both Councils understand fully the need to be prudent and to ensure good value for money. Both Councils would however wish to request that cross-department innovation be considered to mitigate against any / all negative impacts i.e. Working with Regeneration to develop, launch and promote a car sharing scheme for commuters and/or more innovative schemes to drive up usage and subsequent viability of public transport.	Officers will regularly review the whole network to ensure the best possible network is maintained and best value delivered. If there are specific areas that need further attention Officers can investigate these.
3	Nelson Community Council	Termination of the Service 7 evening contract would mean that there will no longer be any evening service between Pontypridd and Nelson. This would seriously impact on any residents returning from Cardiff from work or leisure activities. There is no alternative public transport available into Nelson (train or bus) during this	Withdrawing services is always a last option but there are just not enough people using them.  The cost of extending the N.A.T. service X38 will be of a similar order to the existing service 7, as the resource requirement and operational costs are similar, with

		<p>period. Residents returning from Cardiff could well be marooned in Pontypridd with only the use of a taxi service available to them to continue their journey home.</p> <p>A solution might be to extend the operation of the X38 N.A.T. service into the evening which could cost less than retaining the Service 7 contract.</p>	<p>similarly low passenger levels predicted.</p>
4	Nelson Community Council	<p>The proposed alternative service between Blackwood and Nelson involving the Service 26 and Service C16 routes could be difficult for the aged, for parents with young children and for residents with any disability to use because the location of the bus stops are some distance apart.</p> <p>Also, there is no guarantee that the two buses would be running at appropriate times for passengers to transfer from one service to the other without a considerable delay.</p>	<p>Noted – the options noted highlighted alternative services along the existing Blackwood to Pontypridd route (noting in this instance that the 26 provides an alternative service between Blackwood and Ystrad Mynach). If there are specific areas that need further attention (such as the opportunities for connection), officers can investigate these.</p>
5	Nelson Community Council	<p>Withdrawing the contribution to the Beacons Bus service could potentially lead to it being withdrawn by the BBNPA which would be regrettable as the Beacons services are described as being ‘popular’ in the report.</p>	<p>The Beacons Bus network is controlled by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority with funding from other local authorities and agencies all with their own budget pressures. The council has negotiated with the co-ordinators and the Beacons Bus network will continue for 2013.</p>
6	Bargoed Town Council	<p>Tredegar to Ystrad Hospital (Sundays) (Mon-Sat evenings)</p> <p>This is a massive subsidy for such a small cohort of passengers. However, the hospital houses the only Local Emergency Centre in the county borough (although not a 24 hour A&amp;E it does has a 24 hour</p>	<p>Withdrawing services is always a last option but there are just not enough people using them.</p> <p>The evening and Sunday extensions to the Hospital were introduced by the Council when the contracts were re-rendered in July 2011 and provide a through facility</p>

		<p>medical assessment and minor injuries unit). It's an important service for people who have no other means of getting to the hospital. The council need to consider properly (perhaps project-manage) the impact of reducing or withdrawing services for this vulnerable customer base</p>	<p>that doesn't exist in the daytime from areas above Bargoed. The evening service will continue on a reduced frequency, but the link to the hospital has not generated significant additional demand. Residents of Pontlloftyn and Rhymney will still be able to access the hospital by using route 1 as far as Bargoed then changing to Route 50 to/from Ystrad Mynach Hospital.</p>
7	Bargoed Town Council	<p>Bargoed to Merthyr (Sundays) (Mon-Sat evenings) A large number of passengers will be affected by the proposed reduction in this service. It may work from Monday to Friday and on Sundays but is the reduction really appropriate on Saturdays? I know many local families and teenagers use this service on Saturdays to go to the cinema in Merthyr. Until Caerphilly borough has it's own cinema in Bargoed could the council not retain an hourly service on Saturdays and review the position in a year/18 months when our own cinema is built?</p>	<p>Saturday loadings are only marginally higher than weekday loadings and there is insufficient additional revenue to cover the costs of providing the services. A 2 hourly service will continue on evenings and Sundays – this frequency of service on a Sunday is comparable with other areas of the county borough.</p>
8	Bargoed Town Council	<p>Bargoed to Gilfach Estate (Mon-Sat early evening) This bus serves one of our most deprived communities. Understanding that this service was running at a profit until it ceased stopping outside the Plasnewydd pub, off the High Street. Could the council look into this?</p>	<p>The service continues to serve the Plasnewydd pub on Mondays to Fridays – currently on Saturdays the service is unable to due to the regeneration works. The service has been subsidised for almost a decade as it was not viable to provide on a commercial basis.</p>
9	George Maddocks (Community Partnership)	<p>Would it be possible to add to the sheets a column to each sheet the additional costs to individual travellers if any and is this the thin edge of the wedge to reduce or cancel all routes that are not creating profits.</p>	<p>The Council is unable to assess the additional costs to passengers from the changes to contracts as we do not have individual details of the passengers using the services, their journey requirements or purpose to confirm suitable alternatives. Appendix 1 identifies</p>

			<p>alternative services available - for some passengers, it will mean varying their time of travel, or changing between services.</p> <p>The services involved are all subsidised and would not operate without financial support from the Council. Whilst the majority of bus services in the county borough operate on a commercial basis without subsidy, all evening, Sunday and many daytime services could not be run without subsidy. There are no plans to make further cuts to the supported bus network, but any additional reduction in revenue funding will impact further on service levels.</p>
10	Cllr Judith Pritchard (Gelligaer Community Council)	<p>I should like to object most strongly to plans for the removal (on Sundays) and reduction of bus services (Mon-Sat) through Cefn Hengoed &amp; Hengoed to Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr</p> <p>There are many elderly patients in the rehabilitation and dementia wards at this hospital who sometimes stay there for a considerable length of time.</p> <p>Since they are all in single rooms they are in great need of visits from relatives to counter social isolation. Many relatives are elderly themselves and without their own means of transport. This plan will mean some very vulnerable patients will have no visits on Sundays, and less visits in the evening and will cause considerable distress.</p> <p>It is claimed that there is an alternative route through Tir-y-berth, but this would involve residents of these two villages walking a considerable distance, which is impossible for many elderly people.</p>	<p>There is a high cost in providing the current level of service compared with the number of passengers travelling. The evening revised timetables will be based on retaining the journeys that carry the most passengers to minimise the impact, but it is accepted that the reduction or loss in service will cause difficulty for some passengers.</p> <p>The alternative options noted highlight alternative services along the whole length of the route and it is accepted that these will not offer suitable alternatives for all passengers.</p>

11	Bedwas Trethomas and Machen Community Council.	I don't think this affects BTM Ward.	Noted.
12	Draethen, Waterloo & Rudry Community Council	We discussed last night and agreed that as only 3 users in later bus we cannot give any argument to justify saving it!	Noted.
13	Caerphilly Town Council	I passed it on to members but I don't think there will be any objections. None were made at the meeting.	Noted.
14	Maesycwmmmer Community Council	Maesycwmmmer Community Council would like to register its regret that the only evening services for the Number 7 service which stops in the village are to be discontinued. The Council does however understand that this may be necessary in order to protect the daytime service.	Noted. The main road is still served in the evening by route 26.
15	Blackwood Town Council	Blackwood Town Council strongly object to the withdrawal of security cover at the Bus Station, and given the history of the site consider this a very short sighted step. Officers themselves acknowledge this might result in an increase in anti social behaviour, and given the effective partnership work between Gwent Police and CCBC over recent months to improve the situation, we would hate to see things deteriorate again, at eventual costs in excess of proposed savings.	The funding contribution towards the security cover at Blackwood Bus Station has been funded directly from Local Transport Services Grant (LTSG), which has been cut significantly. The bus station has high quality CCTV that is monitored from the Control Room at Tir-y-berth, along with help points for passengers that allow anyone with concerns in the Bus Station to connect directly with an operator in the CCTV Control Room. The Council will continue to meet regularly with the Police to address any public order concerns at the facility.
16	Blackwood Town Council	They also object strongly to any cut in service to the Blackwood to Ystrad Mynach (rail linc) that would impact on those who regularly use the bus/train service	The Council will work with the current transport provider to minimise the impact on regular passengers, in particular the core of regular commuters who use the

		to access their employment in Cardiff. This service is much more efficient than the direct bus service, and as stated is not a viable alternative for regular commuters - Blackwood after all is not connected directly to the rail network.	service.
17	Blackwood Town Council	<p>My Council have concerns on the other proposed cuts in services, and how they might affect our community, namely Blackwood to Pontypridd (evenings), Penyfan Diversions (early mornings), Blackwood to Bargoed via Markham (early evenings).</p> <p>Our major concerns are the possible knock on effect on employment, as in the case of Rail Linc &amp; Penyfan Diversions, possible curtailment of social visits.</p>	<p>The nearest bus stops are situated in Croespenmaen, so workers in Penyfan would have to walk up to 1 mile to their places of work. However, there are no return journeys in the afternoon / evening which implies passengers find alternative arrangements when leaving work.</p> <p>Whilst the Blackwood to Bargoed via Markham may inconvenience some passengers there are alternatives as follows:  Blackwood – Markham: Route 56 departing Blackwood at 1703 &amp; 1803  Markham – Blackwood: Route 56 departing Markham at 1800 &amp; 1900</p> <p>Blackwood – Aberbargoed: Route 12 departing Blackwood at 1745  Aberbargoed – Blackwood: Route 12 departing Aberbargoed at 1820</p> <p>Blackwood – Bargoed: Route 14 departing Blackwood at 1740  Bargoed – Blackwood: Route 14 departing Bargoed at 1750 &amp; 1830</p>
18	Blackwood Town Council	The Brecon Beacons Service helps provide access to the countryside in line with the Well Being Strategy.	The Beacons Bus network is controlled by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority with funding from other local authorities and agencies all with their own budget

			pressures. The council has negotiated with the co-ordinators and the Beacons Bus network will continue for 2013.
19	Gelligaer Community Council	<p>Members of Gelligaer Community Council wish to object to cuts in any subsidised buses travelling through the Gelligaer Community Council area.</p> <p>We feel that the most vulnerable members of the community, many of whom do not have their own transport, will suffer the most, many becoming quite isolated.</p> <p>We are particularly concerned by the proposals to cut the bus services running to the hospital in Ystrad Mynach.</p>	<p>There is a high cost in providing the current level of service compared with the number of passengers travelling. The service between Cefn Hengoed and Ystrad Mynach Hospital was improved in July 2011 from every 2 hours (Mon-Sat evening) but has failed to generate additional passenger numbers. This change would restore service levels to that before July 2011. Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday passenger numbers through Cefn Hengoed, Hengoed and Penpedairheol account for only 4-8% of passengers along the entire route – less than 1 per trip. There are no changes to buses from Gelligaer and Penybryn to Ystrad Mynach Hospital</p>
20	Risca West Community Council	<p>Members of Risca West Community Council made no comment in relation to the proposed changes in the Risca West area.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
21	Fochriw & Pentwyn Residents Association	<p>It is my understanding that the proposed changes would see the service cut from one bus per hour to one bus every two hours, during the evenings and on a Sunday. The people of the village rely on the bus service as a means of transport for both work and leisure. It is the ONLY transport link we have it is over 1.5miles to the nearest train station and that will only give us access to services heading to the south. We have no other transport giving us access to Merthyr Tydfil.</p>	<p>Many buses on Sundays and Bank Holidays in the county borough operate every 2 hours, whilst in many other communities, no Sunday bus services operate at all. The evening revised timetables will be based on retaining the journeys that carry the most passengers to minimize the impact, but it is accepted that the reduction in service will cause difficulty for some passengers. The changes to services 1 and 4 in the evenings will be looked at together and will be as evenly spaced as possible between Rhymney, Pontlloftyn and Bargoed to at least maintain an hourly gap between these communities.</p>



22	Fochriw & Pentwyn Residents Association	<p>I understand this is a cost cutting exercise due to reduction of funding for subsidized services and by cutting the service you will save £9,500 from the reduction of the Number 1 service on a Sunday. The cost to the village in both Work and social links would be huge. Many members of the local community work various shift patterns and will find the changes may cause them to be unable to get to work or home from work without a two-hour wait. Many members of the village use the local bus service to visit family outside the village. As I am sure you are aware the village rates very high on the Welsh Multiple Index of Deprivation. As a result many of the residents do not have access to private transport and rely on the services that we have. Without them we would be totally isolated and the reduction in services may see a small financial gain the council but we feel this gain is not offset by the issues you would cause our community.</p>	<p>Many buses on Sundays and Bank Holidays in the county borough operate every 2 hours, whilst in many other communities, no Sunday bus services operate at all. There is a high cost in providing the current level of service compared with the number of passengers travelling. The revised timetables will be based on retaining the journeys that carry the most passengers to minimise the impact, but it is accepted that the reduction or loss in service will cause difficulty for some passengers.</p>
23	Fochriw & Pentwyn Residents Association	<p>I feel that at least part of the saving required could be recovered by a small increase in fares and was wondering if this had been considered as an alternative before services are cut. I am sure if you were to notify passengers that this was the only alternative to cutting the service they would agree a small change in fares would be worthwhile.</p>	<p>Whilst an increase in fares would achieve some additional revenue it would not be significant to offset the cost of providing the service. The council would also be reluctant to increase the cost of travel higher than that over the prevailing daytime service and an increase might deter/reduce numbers travelling. In addition, a high proportion of users travel with concessionary passes – whilst the cost of this travel is reimbursed it is from a set fare controlled by the Welsh Government which cannot be amended.</p>