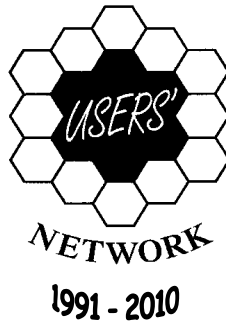


Now in our 19th year of supporting users to speak out

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**The Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network (WSUN)
Response to the
"Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011 - 2026"
Consultation Questions and WSUN's WITS Strategic Overview**

Foreword

The Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network (WSUN) is a user-controlled organization that meets the Department of Health "Design Criteria" for an established User Led Organisation (ULO). WSUN supports people who come with the experience of having physical or sensory impairments, using mental health services, being an older person, or having some learning difficulties (Hereafter referred to as marginalised groups, which will also apply to the other 6 Equality Strands.) Our members are supported to be involved and give their views to shape Services, such as Health, Social Care, Community Partnerships' and until very recently with Wiltshire Police Equality Unit and through this contact WSUN supported a Disability Forum. WSUN has recently been commissioned to set up Focus Groups to undertake Access Audits and scrutinise plans for Disability Access Issues.

The WITS Project

We host the very successful award winning project Wiltshire Independent Travel Scheme (WITS). WITS provide practical support for disabled people, with a variety of different impairments to travel on public transport for work, leisure, social and educational purposes. The project is flexible to meet the needs of the person.

The scheme is based at our Semington Office, near Trowbridge. However, staff provide support all across Wiltshire. Since the WITS project began in 2007, there have been over 250 enquiries for individual travel training, out of that number over 200 service users, are now travelling independently on public transport across

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Wiltshire. This has enabled their families, friends and support workers to utilise their time elsewhere.

WSUN believes, and is totally committed to the vision and values of social inclusion, (including equality and human rights for all). Ensuring and promoting dignity and respect for all in our local communities. But all Local Authorities (with social care responsibilities) need to ensure ULOs are supported appropriately with continual funding to ensure this vision becomes a “true reality for all,” not just a few. **Current funding for WITS has been withdrawn for next year, unless we find alternative funding, this invaluable project will cease to exist.**

WSUN has recently taken on, (from the 1st August 2010) the Host responsibility for the Wiltshire LINK (locally known as “Wiltshire Involvement Network – WIN” and now “Co-produces” this function with Age UK Wiltshire.

Case Study of a WITS success story

Case study for a female living in West Wiltshire area (names have been changed to protect her identity).

“Diane lives in a flat in West Wiltshire, and has had travel support for a few hours a week. She has a physical/sensory impairment and learning difficulties. WITS were contacted by Diane as she wanted to attend a college course, but was struggling with the taxi fares as they were getting more expensive. She wanted to be able to travel to Trowbridge College independently, so she could improve her learning and social skills. After the first initial contact with WITS, we talked to Diane about the long walk to the nearest bus stop. However, we felt that it would be the most direct and easiest route to remember. It was the safest route for her as she has to walk with the aid of a walker. The use of dropped kerbs are required for crossing the road and also the bus service required would be an accessible service. Diane was given a simplified and enlarged print of the bus timetables that needed to be used for her journey there and back.

Diane has now successfully completed the course, she says that this has improved her quality of life and she is now able to meet new and old friends in town. She has gained confidence and is looking forward to new opportunities that independent travel can bring.

WSUN's & WITS own organisational Strategic Overview on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011 – 2026

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The numbering in this report relates directly to the numbering in the Wiltshire Transport Plan, for ease of cross-referencing and if there are gaps it means WSUN has no comment to make on those questions:

Question One

Do you agree that if funding for transport is significantly cut as a result of the government's spending review, the council's focus should be on maintaining and making best use of Wiltshire's existing transport infrastructure, and in fulfilling its statutory duties?

Answers:

Yes, but with regard to your statement "The Government's guidance that sets out five national transport goals which are expected to act as the over-arching priorities for LTPs. The Department of Transport also expects local transport authorities to assess the relative importance goals.

- WSUN & WITS believes "Promote Equality of Opportunity" in table 2, should be as "Important" as marginalised groups who are often extremely isolated living in some of the rural locations in Wiltshire
- In our joint experience people from marginalised groups lack the skills, empowerment, and confidence to use public transport and this needs to be supported, which will go some way to demonstrating how Wiltshire Council discharges its corporate responsibility to be inclusive of all. This should also include areas of Wiltshire that can evidence as Socially & Economically deprived, in order to comply with the Single Equality Bill Act (October 2010)

Question Two

Do you support these preferred options?

Answers:

Yes

Question Three

Do you agree with these investment priorities?

Answers:

Yes broadly speaking, but the impact on these priorities for marginalised groups need to be recognised, taking into account points raised in question 1 and 4.

Question Four

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Are there other approaches that you think we should include? As in question 1; WSUN believes a project that meets the needs of disabled and disadvantaged groups in society to develop or re-learn the skills and gain the confidence to travel using public transport systems. This aids marginalised peoples' inclusion in society, in terms of increasing:-

- individuals independence
- capacity to travel further a field to gain meaningful opportunities to employment
- further education opportunities
- social networks (breaking the cycle of isolation and possible depression)
- opportunities for rehabilitation back in to society after a medical set-back

Question Five

Should a third tier of freight routes, defined as 'Access Routes', be established to encourage the sustainable delivery of goods within towns and to industrial estates and other freight generators?

Answer:

No comment to make

Question Six

Do you agree with the proposal to identify, improve and/or maintain a minimum 'basic' standard of lorry parking in Wiltshire?

Answer:

No comment to make

Question Seven

Do you agree with the council's pragmatic approach to rail freight?

No comment to make

Question Eight

Do you support the proposed long-term public transport strategy?

Answer:

Yes with recognition of the needs of marginalised groups mentioned in questions 1 and 4

Question Nine

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Which of the main implementation plan options (a-v) do you think are the five most important (please rank in order of preference)?

D, E, R, P, H

Question Ten

Do you agree with these funding priorities for public transport?

In principle yes, as long as they have completed a thorough survey into the services that they are prioritising, ensuring this is what is required for the passengers. The bus companies are not running services that are not used.

Question Eleven

Do you support the proposed approach to road safety education?

Answer

Yes, agree with the proposed approach.

Question Twelve

Do you support the proposed approach to road safety enforcement?

Answer

Yes

Question Thirteen

Do you support the proposed approach to road safety engineering?

Answer

No Comment to make

General Comments

There needs to be a universal approach to the parking regulation regarding the "Blue Badge Scheme" implementation in Wiltshire. Some of our members' have reported differences in the application of the rules across the "old" district council boundaries.