

Proposed Bus Service Changes for Taunton & Surrounding Areas

September Timetable Change Proposals

These proposed changes reflect ongoing passenger feedback, operational observations, connectivity ambitions and alignment with the Government's "Better Connected Communities" policy agenda. The emphasis is on improving access to employment, healthcare, education, rail connectivity and town centre access while making services simpler, more reliable and easier to understand.

These changes are as a result of engagement with passengers, residents, hospital workers and patient groups, 6th form students at Richard Huish, Taunton's Trade association and Chamber of Commerce. We are currently working with Taunton LCN and Taunton Town Council to seek endorsement of these proposals.

They have been set out route by route across Taunton and although some routes have a comprehensive details , others like the 4 and 6 need a detailed review on how to strengthen these routes going forward.

We have also tried to identify some changes to routes to improve business and grow the market, helping to reduce the challenges in using the bus network across the town. It's obvious from our conversations that improving access to MPH for staff is top priority followed by patient appointments and we would further on development of changes to meet this demand.

Route 1 / 1E – Priorswood – Taunton – Musgrove Park Hospital

Proposed Changes

Early Morning Musgrove Park Hospital Extensions

The current early morning journeys no longer adequately meet the needs of key workers at Musgrove Park Hospital following timetable revisions introduced in April, and thus has followed feedback from local residents across Priorswood.

It is proposed that:

- The **06:05** and **07:00** departures from the Parade originally operated direct into Taunton, but post April were routed via Nerrols, I am not sure if that has generated significant new business.
- Both services extend through to Musgrove Park Hospital in a loop and timings tighten up
- Services operate:
- Outbound via Parkfield Road (use Manor Orchard Stop)
- Return via Wellington Road

- Vehicles should use the internal hospital link road rather than the A&E frontage if an issue with the hospital.
- Return journeys continue to Priorswood to provide connectivity for night-shift workers

This proposal specifically supports:

- 07:00 hospital shift starts
- 08:00 County Hall and hospital staff arrivals (although the withdrawal of the 07.06 from Priorswood meant that 07.30 starters at County Hall can no longer use the bus.
- Early morning healthcare support staff to/from the hospital
- Reduced car dependency for NHS workers

Passenger feedback strongly suggests the current full diversion routing is lightly used during these early journeys and does not justify the additional journey time penalty.

Evening Service Improvements

It is proposed that:

- The current **17.30 & 18:20 departure from the Parade** should instead originate from Musgrove Park Hospital.
- This would provide a realistic return connection for staff finishing at 17.00 & 18:00.
- The route should follow the same Parkfield Road/Wellington Road pattern.

This is repeatedly identified as one of the largest current gaps in Taunton's urban network and Priorswood is the furthest away from MPH and the P&R network .

Route 1E Evening Shift Pattern Review

The current evening departures from Musgrove Park Hospital depart approximately five minutes before typical shift completion times.

It is proposed that:

- Evening departures are retimed to leave MPH at approximately **5 or 10 minutes past the hour at MPH** towards Priorswood.
- They arrive from Silk Mills P&R and wait to enable passengers to travel from the P&R to the hospital.
- This would align with real-time hospital shift patterns.
- The changes would improve reliability of connections for healthcare staff and reduce dependence on taxis and private vehicles.

Warwick Road Routing Consistency

During daytime operation, Route 1 serves:

- Warwick Road
- Rochester Road

providing access to five stops along the route.

However, evening 1E journeys currently operate directly between Ladymead Road and Dorchester Road Shops, omitting these stops entirely.

This creates:

- Passenger confusion
- Inconsistent routing
- Operational ambiguity for drivers
- Missed accessibility opportunities

It is proposed that:

- Evening 1E journeys permanently operate via Warwick Road.
- The existing timetable appears capable of absorbing this routing.
- This would standardise the service pattern and reduce confusion.

Sunday Service Development

The introduction of a Sunday service remains one of the strongest requests from residents in:

- Priorswood
- Lyngford
- Ladymead
- Holway
- Galmington.

With both Bridgwater and Yeovil now benefiting from Sunday urban services, Taunton risks falling behind comparable Somerset towns.

A potential option could include:

- A linked Priorswood – Town Centre – Holway/Galmington service
- Every 60 minutes
- Operation between approximately 09:00 and 18:00

Benefits include:

- Access to work
- Retail and hospitality employment
- Sunday markets
- Social inclusion
- Reduced isolation
- Support for town centre events and businesses

Infrastructure & Timetable Corrections

The following timetable and stop infrastructure amendments are requested:

Add:

- Denmark Hill towards Taunton

- Lyngford Road One Stop
- St Peter's Church towards Selworthy Road
- Consideration of a new stop between Eastwick Road and St Peter's Church towards town

Remove:

- Duplicate/non-existent Priorswood Shops stop on Eastwick Road

Route 3 – Bishops Hull – Holway

Proposed Timetable Simplification

Passenger feedback indicates the current timetable is heavily designed around operational layover requirements rather than customer usability and timings are slack and need reviewing, which would also help with additional requests.

This results in:

- Excessive waiting time at the Parade
- Uneven journey times
- Passenger confusion

It is proposed that:

- A consistent "clock-face" timetable be introduced
- Services depart at the same minutes past each hour throughout the day
- Depart the Parade towards Holway ideally 30 minutes apart from Route 6 to spread out the service pattern.

This would significantly improve network legibility and better spread of journeys.

Killams Estate Extension

Residents in the Killams area continue to request direct bus access.

Given the current recovery time within the timetable, it is believed feasible to:

- Divert selected or all journeys through the Killams estate
- Improve accessibility without major resource increases

Farrants Close Evening Extension

Current inconsistencies exist regarding last evening's journey, 17.06 Orchid Close

Some drivers extend to Farrants Close while others terminate at Bishops Hull Church.

It is proposed that:

- The final evening journey formally extends to Farrants Close
- This becomes a permanent and published arrangement

Routes 4 / 6 / 7 – Network Review

A full operational review is requested across these routes, as patronage has seen decline over the last few years and something is not working, especially on routes 4 & 6 which have seen dwindling numbers.

- 4
- 6
- 7

The objective should be:

- More sustainable timetables
- Access to MPH for key workers
- Improved punctuality
- Better interworking opportunities
- Simpler network presentation
- Serve the wider area, maybe Hankeridge Farm and/or Ruishton/Creech St Micheal.

Potential integration opportunities with Route 3, a Somerset Council-supported service, should also be explored.

Route 12 – Monkton Heathfield Corridor

Proposed Changes

- Reroute via A3259 on inward journey to Taunton rather than Staddlestone and add a new stop at Sellicks Road. This would allow time for other changes and ease conflict coming out of Monkton Heathfield.
- Reroute via Batts Drive and Stubby Road, either via Bossington, Selworthy and Eastwick Road or direct onto Priorswood Road - would serve more homes and fill gaps between stops and viable journeys.
- Operate directly into Taunton via Priorswood Road and reconnect parts of route 2
- Avoid diversion via Obridge Flyover and Trenchard Way, due to low patronage on these sections and mean a greater sustainability. Passengers currently from Trenchard Way walk to the station to have a greater number of buses.

Additional proposals:

- Extend evening operation from 07.00 to 18:00 rather than finishing at 14.00 hrs
- Explore extension towards Musgrove Park Hospital

These changes would improve:

- Journey times

- Estate penetration
- Access to healthcare and employment
- Make more sustainable

Route 20 – Seaton/Honiton - Wellington-Taunton

Proposed Changes

It is proposed that:

- Non-college day and daytime journeys extend to/from Taunton Railway Station
- This would:

- Improve rail integration
- Support Wellington commuters
- Provide interim rail connectivity before Wellington station reopening post-2028

Routes 21 / 21A – Bridgwater Corridor

Proposed Changes

It is proposed to reroute some journeys on route 21A to/from Taunton via Priorswood

- Route 21A operates via:
- Obridge Flyover / Trenchard Way
- Taunton Railway Station
- Bridge Street

This would strengthen:

- Rail integration as per Better Connectivity Communities , although maintaining key school journeys from Lane Estate to Monkton Heathfield
- Access to Taunton town centre from the east
- Connectivity for Bridgwater, North Petherton and West Monkton passengers to the rail station.

Routes 22 A/B/C/X – Wellington Corridor

Proposed Changes

- Every 30-minute services divert via Musgrove Park Hospital
- Alternate 30-minute services extend to Taunton Railway Station

Benefits:

- Improved healthcare access
- Better rail integration
- Stronger strategic corridor function
- Reduced interchange complexity

Route 23 / 23B – West Somerset

Proposed Change

- Introduction of a Saturday service
- Suggest two return workings starting in West Bagborough/Bishops Lydeard

This remains a longstanding request from rural communities experiencing limited weekend mobility.

Route 25 / 25A – Wiveliscombe / Dulverton Corridor

Further proposals to follow under Barrie's report, including:

- Corridor timetable review and merge 26 & 27 into a new weekday service
Dulverton/Wiveliscombe to Wellington
- Maintain peak time service to/from Taunton via Cotford St Luke and Wiveliscombe
- New off-peak service Taunton, Norton Fitzwarren, Cotford, Bishop Lydeard.

- **Route 24** - Tiverton to Silk Mills P&R (3 per day) early morning and mid-evening only.

- Proposal to divert one service via Bampton and Wiveliscombe to provide an earlier work time arrival in Taunton, suggestions 05.47 Tiverton to Silk Mills P&R arriving at 06.25 - which then forms the 06.30 arriving at MPH at 06.39 and the return working at 20.25 from Silk Mills P&R to Tiverton, which leaves the hospital at 20.18 or Market House at 20.13.

Route 28 / 28A – Minehead Corridor

Parade Connectivity

The inward stop at the Parade has proven highly successful.

Passengers use this stop for:

- Town centre access
- P&R interchange
- Hospital connectivity
- Retail access
- Leisure trips

It is proposed that:

- Parade stops remain permanently
- This continues even following the opening of the mobility hub

This simple intervention strongly aligns with the Government's integrated transport objectives.

Early Morning Connectivity

It is proposed that the **06:44 departure from Minehead** continues to serve:

- Bancks Street
- Alcombe

This journey forms an important early morning connection for:

- Workers
- Rail passengers
- Healthcare staff
- Education trips

Retention of this routing is considered essential to maintaining accessibility across the western end of the corridor.

Evening Rail Connections

Passenger feedback consistently highlights poor late evening connectivity between rail arrivals at Taunton and onward bus services towards West Somerset.

The following timetable changes are proposed:

18:50 Departure Retiming

- Current departure: **18:50 (18.55)**
- Proposed departure: **19:00 (19.05)**

This would provide a realistic connection from:

- The **17:03 departure from London**
- Arriving Taunton at approximately **18:53**

22:55 Departure Retiming

- Current departure: **22:55 (23.00)**
- Proposed Parade departure: **23:10 (23.15)**
- Proposed Taunton Railway Station departure: **23:15**

This would provide a connection from:

- The **21:03 departure from London**
- Arriving Taunton at approximately **23:02**

These changes would:

- Improve passenger confidence
- Support tourism and leisure travel
- Improve integration between rail and bus
- Better reflect accepted interchange standards
- Reduce dependency on private cars and taxis

Additional Sunday Service Proposals

There is growing demand for improved Sunday connectivity between Minehead, West Somerset, and Taunton, particularly linked to:

- Tourism
- Hospitality employment
- Leisure travel
- Rail connectivity
- Sunday shopping and events

It is proposed that additional Sunday journeys are introduced as follows:

Additional Sunday Departures from Minehead

- **08:00 Minehead – Taunton**
- **09:00 Minehead – Taunton**

These journeys would:

- Improve access to key rail services from Taunton
- Support onward travel towards:
 - Bristol
 - Exeter
 - London
- Encourage tourism and leisure travel
- Support hospitality and retail workers
- Promote sustainable transport use across West Somerset

- Also provide early connections from Taunton suburbs, Norton Fitzwarren, and Cotford St Luke.

Additional Sunday Evening Departures from Taunton

- **19:00 Taunton – Minehead**
- **20:00 Taunton – Minehead**

These later evening journeys would:

- Improve connectivity with evening rail arrivals
- Support visitors returning from London, Bristol, and Exeter
- Assist evening economy workers
- Support events, festivals, theatre, and leisure activity within Taunton
- Reduce dependency on taxis and private vehicles

Improved Sunday evening integration between rail and bus services is increasingly essential if public transport is to become a genuine alternative to car travel across Somerset and West Somerset.

Routes 30 & 99 – Chard / Axminster Corridor

Proposed Changes

Extend Routes 30 and 99 to:

- Taunton Railway Station

This would improve:

- Rail integration
- Connectivity between Chard, Ilminster, Axminster and Taunton
- Cross-town access

The proposal highlights the current anomaly whereby:

- Route 30 connects effectively with South Western Railway services at Axminster Railway Station
- Yet Somerset residents lack a direct link to Taunton station
- On Route 30 the bus runs non-stop from Thornfalcon Hill to Ilminster , explore opportunities to introduce safe bus stops to serve communities long the route.

Route 51 – North Curry Corridor

Proposed Changes

- Divert via Blackbrook Way
- Serve the Diagnostic Centre
- Extend/start journeys at Taunton Railway Station

Additional benefits:

- Improved access to Richard Huish College
- Better healthcare integration along with 30 & 376 which will help to give a more comprehensive journey to Diagnostic centre in line with Government's Better Connected Communities policy.

Route 54 – Yeovil Corridor

Proposed Changes

The following services to be diverted via Blackbrook Way, South Road to serve Richard Huish College

- 06:55 Yeovil – Taunton
- 16:45 Taunton – Yeovil
-

This request arises directly from:

- Student feedback
- Student Parliament
- Citizen Somerset engagement

Extend all services through to Taunton Station in line with the government's Better Connected Communities policy

Routes 97/98

Further proposals to be confirmed following review and how to complement with route 7 to/from Galmington

Route 374 – Wells/Glastonbury/Creech St Michael / Ruishton - Taunton

Proposals

Improve service frequency between:

- Creech St Michael
- Ruishton
- Blackbrook Diagnostic Centre

This would significantly strengthen local healthcare accessibility. This could be part of a review of other services to help improve frequency between the growing communities in this part of Taunton.

Set up a review on how this could be achieved.

Park & Ride Network

Town Centre Stop Improvements

Current spacing between:

- Corporation Street
- Old Hospital

is excessive.

It is proposed that:

- An additional stop is introduced near Primark/Alms Houses

This would:

- Improve accessibility
- Better support retail trips
- Involve minimal operational impact
- Mirror the success of Parade stopping arrangements on Routes 25 and 28

Sunday Park & Ride Services

Demand for Sunday Park & Ride operation is growing rapidly due to:

- Sunday trading
- Markets
- Festivals
- Events in Vivary Park
- Visitor growth

It is proposed that:

- Sunday operation runs:
- 09:30–17:30
- Every 30 minutes

This would support:

- Economic growth
- Tourism
- Reduced congestion
- Sustainable travel into Taunton town centre