



Overview and Scrutiny Board Reduction in Bus Services Task Group

AUGUST 2011

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Supporting Officer: Amanda Scarce



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



This page is intentional left blank

CONTENTS

1. Chairman's Foreword
2. Background Information
3. Summary of Recommendations
4. Methodology
5. Summary of Investigation
6. Conclusion
7. Acknowledgements
8. List of Supporting Background Papers
9. List of Appendices:
 - Appendix 1** – Topic Proposal Form
 - Appendix 2** – Scoping Checklist
 - Appendix 3** – Sample emails from residents
 - Appendix 4** – Response from Portfolio Holder

This page is intentionally left blank

1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

This cross-party investigation has sought to identify the potential shortfall in public transport provision due to the cuts in bus subsidies proposed by Worcestershire County Council.

At the time this task group was convened major concerns were expressed by residents about the viability and lack of clarification on the future of bus services across the district. This task group has confirmed that bus services in the district are a key way of residents getting to and from work, for businesses attracting customers, children getting to school and college safely and ensuring elderly and vulnerable residents are not left housebound and cut off from friends and family.

There can be no doubt that the people of Bromsgrove care deeply about their bus service as evidenced by the overwhelming response to the investigation. It is the importance of these services to our residents that led this investigation to cover the response and processes followed by this Council to represent its residents concerns over cuts to bus subsidies.

These services are vital to the day to day lives of the residents we serve and there can be little doubt that the future prosperity and regeneration of the Town Centre depend on us working together to address the real shortfalls in services that this report has identified.

I would like to put on record my thanks to all those who have contributed to this report including Councillors, Bus Operators and members of the public.

I hope the conclusions and recommendations of this report will be the first step in addressing some of the real concerns that still exist over the future of some bus services.

Councillor Chris Bloore
Chairman
Reduction in Bus Services Task Group

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Proposal Form (Appendix 1) relating to the Reduction in Bus Services was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 11th July 2011, by Councillor C. J. Bloore.
- 2.2 Councillor Bloore said he had been contacted by many residents who were concerned at the proposed cut in services from Worcestershire County Council (WCC). He was of the view that when a decision is being made by another body and which has a serious impact on the District as a whole, the Council should act on the residents' behalf and put forward the concerns they had. In this case the removal of key public transport services could also have a detrimental effect on the economic growth of the District.
- 2.3 Councillor Bloore also informed Members that the matter needed to be investigated urgently as it was likely that WCC would make a decision on the reduction in bus services as early as September 2011.
- 2.4 Following discussion it was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board that a Task Group would be established to scrutinise the Reduction in Bus Services and that Councillor Bloore would be appointed Chairman.

3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1(a)	That the Cabinet be requested to clarify what the procedure is for responding to consultations from Worcestershire County Council and whether that procedure was followed in respect of the bus consultation; and
Recommendation 1(b)	That if there is no established procedure in place, then an appropriate, open, transparent and inclusive (i.e. cross party) procedure be put in place in order to ensure that any future consultations undertaken at County Council level receive a co-ordinated response from the Council (including checking that an impact assessment has been carried out by WCC and including, where appropriate, consultation with the Economic Development team and the Strategic Planning Officer).
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Recommendation 2	That the Council support Worcestershire County Council by contacting the bus operators, Black Diamond and Johnsons Coaches, to make representations for the 204 service to be reinstated and for clarification on the future of the X50 service.
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Board Inquiry/Task Group Procedure Guidelines (endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at the meeting held on 1st March 2011) following the meeting held on 11th July 2011 copies of the completed Topic Proposal Form were circulated amongst non-Cabinet Members for consideration, with the request that Members interested in participating in the Task Group contact the Committee Services Officer by 10.00 a.m. on 18th July 2011. Membership of the Task Group is detailed below:

Councillor C. J. Bloore (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. M. Buxton
Councillor P. M. McDonald
Councillor L. Mallett
Councillor L. J. Turner
Councillor S. P. Shannon

- 4.2 There was in total five meetings of the Task Group. During the first meeting held on 19th July 2011 an Overview and Scrutiny Exercise Scoping Checklist which included the terms of reference of the task group (Appendix 2) was completed and it was agreed, that the Task Group would concentrate on particular bus service routes within the District:

- ❖ 144 (Worcester to Birmingham)
- ❖ 178 (replaced with X50 and S7 Wythall)
- ❖ 202/204 (Cofton Hackett)
- ❖ 318 Stourbridge

It was also agreed that the following people would be called as witnesses to give evidence:

- ❖ WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport.
- ❖ Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People.
- ❖ Parish Council representatives
- ❖ The Bus Operators who covered the services in question.

With a view to the possible key outcome being:

“The successful maintaining of key routes throughout the district in order to allow residents to go about their daily lives.”

Following the meeting held on 28th July 2011 it was also agreed that the terms of reference would be amended to include:

- ❖ 140/141 (The Stokes to Bromsgrove/Droitwich)

5. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIONS

- 5.1 At the first meeting of the Task Group (19th July 2011) Members all had concerns about particular services that affected their individual Wards, but were equally concerned about the effect the reduction in bus services would have on the District as a whole, and in particular on the District's economic development. The aim of the first meeting was to establish the terms of reference and agree witnesses to be invited to give evidence and the type of questions that needed to be asked of those witnesses.

Specific services were highlighted and Members agreed that the bus operators for those services should be invited to attend a Task Group meeting in order to put forward their views. Example questions were also provided when the invitations were sent out. The following bus operators were invited to attend the meeting held on 8th August 2011.

- ❖ Diamond Bus Company
- ❖ Hansons Local Buses
- ❖ Johnsons Coaches
- ❖ First Midland Red

In order to ensure an inclusive approach, the Task Group agreed to invite representatives from all Parish Councils to either attend a Task Group meeting, or where this was not possible, due to the short space of time available to complete the investigation, provide written comments to be included within the evidence gathering process.

Verbal evidence was received from the following Parish Councils:

- ❖ Belbroughton
- ❖ Clent
- ❖ Lickey & Blackwell
- ❖ Stoke
- ❖ Wythall

Written evidence was provided by the following:

- ❖ Bourneheath
- ❖ Lickey & Blackwell (Blackwell area specifically)

The Task Group recognised that the reduction in bus services was a decision made at county council level and that there was no relevant portfolio holder or head of service at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC). However, as Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People it was felt that Councillor Mrs. M. Sherrey would be the most relevant Portfolio Holder as it was likely that the changes would have a particular effect on older people, and the young and vulnerable people. The Portfolio Holder duly agreed to attend a Task Group meeting.

The Task Group also wished to meet with the WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to find out the following:

- ❖ How was it agreed as to which services would be reduced?
- ❖ On what basis were these decisions made?
- ❖ What impact assessments had been done to support the decisions being made?
- ❖ His general view on the future of public transport throughout the County.

Unfortunately the WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport was unavailable on the dates provided by the Task Group.

Bus Operators Evidence

- 5.2 Representatives from Hansons Local Buses and First Midland Red attended the Task Group meeting held on 8th August 2011. They responded positively when questioned by Members about the affected services. Members agreed that both operators had showed vision and forethought in dealing with the changes that faced them.

Hansons Local Buses, who provided the 318 service, advised the Task Group that they were aware of how important this route was, particularly for those members of the village communities who would be completely isolated without the service. The Task Group was informed that the school service would remain unchanged and the day time service would be every 2 hours and the route had been extended to cover Sidemoor and Bromsgrove Train Station. On its arrival in Stourbridge it had now been timed to link up with a service they also provided to Merry Hill.

First Midland Red explained that for the 144 service which they provided, only the Monday – Thursday service was contracted to WCC, the Friday and Saturday service was completely commercial and would remain unchanged. The Task Group was given background information on the service provided and details of the service which would come into effect from 4th September 2011 and the Task Group agreed, that although not ideal were a significant improvement on those first put forward. First Midland Red also provided the Task Group with an insight into how the bus operators work along side WCC.

Parish Council Evidence

- 5.3 Representatives from 5 parish councils attended the Task Group meeting held on 28th July 2011 and were given the opportunity to pass on concerns from the residents in their parish. Several parish councils had held public meetings for residents and articles had frequently been included in various parish magazines in order to encourage residents to

respond to the WCC consultation. Wythall Parish Council had been particularly proactive and had called a public meeting which over 200 people attended. The WCC Head of Integrated Transport and County Councillors had attended this meeting. The Wythall Parish Council representative gave a detailed account of the actions they had taken to date. The WCC Head of Integrated Transport had also attended a Stoke Parish Council meeting and had explained how the decisions had been made and how WCC had arrived at the decision to cut the subsidies to the buses.

An overriding issue was how isolated many of the changes would leave those residents who did not have their own transport and the problems for young people either attending college or school.

The Stoke Parish Council representative was particularly concerned about the 140/141 service and the Task Group agreed to amend the terms of reference to include this service.

The representative from Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council said there was great concern over the 202/204 service as this was a vital service, there was very few facilities for residents in the parish, for example the Post Office had recently been closed, and again the elderly would be particularly isolated without this service and it would also have an affect on 16 to 18 year old young people attending college in Bromsgrove.

Responses from Members of the Public

- 5.4 The Task Group Members were pro-active in gathering evidence and the response from all those contacted was welcomed. Following a letter to the local newspaper from the Chairman and several subsequent articles published, a significant number of members of the public responded with their concerns about the impending changes to the services.

A sample of these responses is attached at Appendix 3 of this report.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<u>Recommendation 2</u>	
That the Council support Worcestershire County Council by contacting the bus operators, Black Diamond and Johnsons Coaches, to make representations for the 204 service to be reinstated and for clarification on the future of the X50 service.	
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People

- 5.5 The Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People attended the meeting held on 28th July 2011 and confirmed that the Council was also concerned about the cuts, in areas where elderly and young people would be most affected. The Portfolio Holder understood that Councillors had been encouraged to respond individually to the consultation and that the Council had contacted WCC through County Councillors (who were also District Councillors) at both consultation stages, but had not received a great deal of information from WCC on the services to be cut/withdrawn.

There were several points raised which the Portfolio Holder was unable to answer and following the meeting the Portfolio Holder contacted the Chairman of the Task Group with a written response (Appendix 4) to advise that concerns over the cuts had been discussed at a Conservative Group meeting as far back at January 2011 and that County Councillors had been very active during the extended consultation period. The Portfolio Holder also pointed out to the Task Group that when the BOLD programme was carried out by WCC, in Bromsgrove, transport came low on the priorities amongst those residents that had attended the sessions organised by WCC. The written response did not however address all issues raised at the meeting, for example whether an impact assessment had been completed at either District or County Council level. The Portfolio Holder was therefore invited to attend a further meeting of the Task Group but was unable to attend due to prior commitments.

Following further investigation, the Task Group was able to ascertain that impact assessments had been completed by WCC.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1(a)

That the Cabinet be requested to clarify what the procedure is for responding to consultations from Worcestershire County Council and whether that procedure was followed in respect of the bus consultation; and

Recommendation 1(b)

That if there is no established procedure in place, then an appropriate, open, transparent and inclusive (i.e. cross party) procedure be put in place in order to ensure that any future consultations undertaken at County Council level receive a co-ordinated response from the Council (including checking that an impact assessment has been carried out by WCC and including, where appropriate, consultation with the Economic Development team and the Strategic Planning Officer).

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

POINT TO BE NOTED:

The Task Group was concerned the effect of a reduced bus service would have on the environment, as there were several areas within the District which had been designated Air Quality Management areas. These areas are continuously monitored by the Environmental Health Team and the air quality could be reduced if the traffic (i.e. an increase in private cars use) was to significantly increase.

Transport-related air quality management measures reduce the impacts of traffic on areas where poor air quality exists. These schemes can assist towards the achievement of good air quality across Worcestershire for all residents and visitors. Where motorised traffic is reduced and sustainable transport modes are promoted, this can enhance accessibility for all, but especially young people and elderly, who often do not have access to personal motorised transport.

Transport-related air quality management measures can help protect the natural environment and the historic fabric of our towns and cities, by reducing the adverse effects of otherwise unsustainable traffic growth and promoting responsible and efficient travel choice.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Task Group was proactive in its approach to the work that it needed to undertake in a short period of time. The response from witnesses at such short notice also highlighted and reiterated the concerns felt by Parish Councils and residents in particular.
- 6.2 Whilst the Task Group was completing its investigation WCC announced that, after consideration, some of the vital services, which had been discussed at Task Group meetings, would not now be withdrawn or the changes would not be as significant as originally anticipated. This related in particular to the evening bus service to Worcester and Birmingham. The new bus timetables would come into effect from 4 September 2011.
- 6.3 The Task Group was concerned that there was little or no written evidence to substantiate any response from the Council or individual councillors to the WCC consultation and was keen to ensure that this should not happen again. A clear audit trail should be available in future to ensure the Council is open, transparent and inclusive (for example through a task group being set up, an informal meeting being held for all Members, through Cabinet setting up an informal group or at a meeting of the full Council) in dealing with issues that may have a significant impact on residents within the Bromsgrove District.
- 6.4 From the evidence provided, the Task Group concluded that the role in consulting with residents was taken by parish councils rather than the District Council. The Task Group Members agreed that by not providing a “united” response to the consultation, opportunities had been missed to influence the form in which the bus services to the District were provided.
- 6.5 Whilst acknowledging that the issue was a County Council decision, the Task Group concluded that a key lesson learned was that a more proactive/co-coordinated response which was inclusive and transparent from the Council at an earlier stage, would not only have helped to influence changes, but also acknowledged to residents that the Council was acting on the issue.
- 6.6 The Task Group was of the view that the reduction in bus services does not only impact on residents, but could have a detrimental effect on the following areas:
- ❖ Environmental (air quality due to increased traffic)
 - ❖ Town Centre Regeneration (for example visitors to the town centre)
 - ❖ Local Development Framework (issues around housing developments due to lack of transport infrastructure)

7. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

7.1 The Task Group wishes to acknowledge and thank, in particular, the attendance of representatives from Hansons Local Buses and First Midland Red for taking the time to attend and give evidence at short notice.

7.2 The Task Group also wishes to thank the following Parish Council representatives who also attended a task group meeting, at short notice, to share their concerns over the reductions in bus services:

Belbroughton
Clent
Lickey & Blackwell
Stoke
Wythall

7.3 Thanks also go to Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey for attending in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People.

8. SUPPORTING BACKGROUND PAPERS

Indicative List of Proposed Local Bus Service Revisions due to WCC Budget Cuts.

WCC Proposals for Reducing Subsidised Bus Services Consultation papers.

WCC Bus Service Review – Additional Consultation papers.

WCC Local Bus Service Revisions in Worcestershire from 4th September 2011.



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

Name of Proposer: CHRISTOPHER BLOORE

Tel No: 01527 877398 Email: C.BLOORE@BROMSGROVE
.GOV.UK

Date: 5/7/11

Title of Proposed Topic:	INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF BUS SUBSIDY CUTS IN BROMSGROVE
Specific subject areas to be investigated:	THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS, WORKERS, TRADERS AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS BY SERVICE CUTS.
Reasons why this subject should be considered:	MAJOR ISSUE OF CONCERN TO ALL RESIDENTS AND TRADERS IN BROMSGROVE
Evidence to support the need for this particular investigation:	VERBAL FROM BUS USERS AND LOCAL TRADERS/STUDENTS. VERBAL/WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICERS AND BUS OPERATORS.
Council priorities it links to:	ENSURING BROMSGROVE IS A NICE PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT
Possible key outcomes: (i.e. what do you anticipate could be achieved?)	IDENTIFY KEY AREAS OF CONCERN AND WHAT SERVICES COULD BE SAVED WITH COOPERATION FROM STAKEHOLDERS. POSSIBLE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC.

Please indicate if any of the following apply to the proposed subject area:

CRITERIA	NO	YES	Why?
Is it a priority issue for the Council or the Local Strategic Partnership?		✓	IT IS A PRIORITY FOR RESIDENTS AND TRADERS AND THEREFORE THE COUNCIL.
Is it an important issue for local residents?		✓	YES.
Is it a topic where Overview and Scrutiny could feasibly and constructively make recommendations?		✓	IT IS THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AND CLRS TO ENSURE PUBLIC CONCERNS ARE HEARD.
Is it a topic where external review would be helpful?	✓		HAVE CONFIDENCE IN BOARD TO CONDUCT THROUGH INVESTIGATION
Is it a topic where a review could be made in time to make recommendations for the executive decision making process?		✓	THERE IS CURRENTLY A 6 WEEK GAP BEFORE POSSIBLE NOTIFICATION OF REMOVAL OF SERVICES
Is it a poorly performing service?		✓	NO. BUT THESE CUTS COULD MAKE IT A POOR SERVICE.
Is it a review that could render significant savings or value for money?		✓	INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE NOW COULD ENSURE VALUE FOR MONEY.
Is the topic strategic in scope?		✓	THE REMOVAL OF PUBLIC

TRANSPORT COULD LEAD

Please return completed forms to: Committee Section, BROMSGROVE TO BECOME
Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council A LESS DESIRABLE
Email: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk PLACE TO LIVE.

This page is intentionally left blank



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Reduction In Bus Services**

- Specific subject areas to be investigated:

The reduction in specific services to areas within Bromsgrove District and in particular the services provided by bus nos. 140/141 (The Stokes to Bromsgrove/Droitwich), 144 (Worcester to Birmingham), 178 (replaced with X50 and S7 Wythall), 202/204 (Cofton Hackett) and 318 (Stourbridge).

- Possible key outcomes:
 (i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

The successful maintaining of key routes throughout the district in order to allow residents to go about their daily lives.

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? YES
- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?
 (Please state name of officer and/or job title)

Portfolio Holder for Community Services

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? YES/
 If so, who and from which organisations?

- Representatives from the bus companies who provide the services
- Relevant Portfolio Holder from WCC
- Head of Integrated Transport (WCC)
- Possibly local residents who use the services

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Information from WCC including the Consultation Reports

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? NO *
If so, where should members visit?

No

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? NO*
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

Consultation already undertaken by WCC. In sufficient time to complete further consultation at District level.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises?
YES/NO*
If so, which authorities?

RBC O&S did short review including consultation. Notice of Motion by cross party members at full Council for representations to be made to WCC.

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary? YES/NO*
If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate? YES/NO*
If yes, please state which authorities:

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? YES/NO*
If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

Report needs to be presented to a special meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Board to be held on 25th August 2011.

Amanda Scarce

APPENDIX 3

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:57
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: bus cuts

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2011 23:24
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: RE: bus cuts [REDACTED]

Dear Cllr Bloore,

Thank you for your reply and [REDACTED], that's great news, I get the 144 into Worcester regularly for N A it leaves Bromsgrove at approx 1900 hrs and departs for my home journey at 2155 from Worcester bus depot for Birmingham meetings 1800 and return 2100hrs

thankyou for representing the people of the County and your ward

Best Wishes [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: bus cuts
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2011 10:45:00 +0100
From: c.bloore@bromsgrove.gov.uk
To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sun 07/08/2011 22:56
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: bus cuts

Dear Councillor Bloore, i am mailing you as i am going to be effected by the proposed bus cuts, i am recovering addict of four years clean and sobre and this recovery from what is a life threatening disease, has only been possible through the fellowship of NARCOTICS ANOYMOUS, which gives me a daily reprieve from active addiction. these meetings are in birmingham and Worcester and i rely on the later running buses to attend meetings 3-5 times a week 144 indigo line-my life line. I need to attend these meetings to be amongst other recovering addicts and get so much mutal support-i am in isolation in Bromsgrove-and although i carry a message of recovery to the still suffering addict-i know of no one else in the town who is in recovery. However i have many supportive friends and family and proffessionals who give valuable support, and feel blessed to have a life now,and be a productive and valuable member of society at last.

I believe without N A i would be dead, i spent 25 years in active addiction which took me to jails and instutions, alcohol and drug addiction is chronic, progressive, and fatal as i am sure you are aware, i have still got permanent residule health problems which is a consequence of my years in active addiction. if the buses go i will find a way but it will make things much more difficult for me, other essential services i accessed have already fallen foul to the cuts. I am sorry if i have gone on, i dont like to complain, but wanted you to know things from my perspective. i apologise for the spelling and grammer. Thankyou please will you respect my anonimity

yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

This email and any files transmitted with it are intended solely for the use of the individual to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email in error any use, dissemination, forwarding or copying of this e-mail is prohibited. If you have received this email in error please notify the ICT Helpdesk via an e-mail to helpdesk@bromsgrove.gov.uk including a copy of this message. Please then delete this email and destroy any copies of it.

Statements and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Authority. The content of this email is not legally binding unless confirmed by us in a signed letter. Bromsgrove District Council has taken every reasonable precaution to minimise the risk of software viruses being contained in attachments to this e-mail. You should, however, carry out your own virus checks before opening the attachment(s). Bromsgrove District Council will not be liable for direct, special, indirect or consequential damages arising from alteration of the contents of this message by a third party or as a result of any virus being passed on.

All Bromsgrove District Council emails may be subject to recording and/or monitoring in accordance with relevant legislation.

Any Freedom of Information requests should be sent directly to foi@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:56
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: Bus service in Co ton Hackett

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 July 2011 21:14
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: Bus service in Co ton Hackett

Dear Cllr Bloore,

I am a pupil at Waseley Hills High School and I live in Cofton Hackett. I am really worried that in September I will have no bus transport to get me to and from school. Last year was very difficult as the Diamond 202 service timetable could not be relied upon to get me to school on time, after our school timetable had been changed (The year before, when I was in year 7, it was great to travel on the school bus which I could get for approximately £5 per week).

Unfortunately this past year I have not been able to go home with my friends who live at Lickey & Marlbrook as I am not allowed to buy a ticket on their bus. We have always gone to each others houses on nights that we go to football, and other activities. This caused a lot of problems for all of us.

Luckily for me, my mum was able to take me to school, and at exam time, she took other pupils who were worried they would miss the start of their GCSE'S. However she wants to go back to work as a nurse but is too worried how I will get to school. My Dad works away so he cant take me.

We are constantly being told that our generation needs to use public transport and to keep car journeys to a minimum (to save our planet). It is also good to feel independent as we grow up. I liked to use the school bus. The walk to school is too far and too difficult. There is not a safe place to cross on Groveley Lane or when you get to Leach Green Lane and Eachway there are no pavements. I don't want to walk in the Lickey Woods by myself but I know this would be quicker. I have to carry books, PE Kit, musical instruments and sometimes cooking ingredients to school. We don't have school lockers or anywhere to hang a coat so everything has to be carried around with us all day. Living in Cofton Hackett is too far away to carry all this stuff and keep it dry when it is bad weather. If I was to walk to school in the rain, I would be wet all day, and when I am older, my GCSE work would be ruined..

My friends that live in Lickey and Marlbrook have the Swan Street Coach take them to school, this is a free service for them. I would like this coach to change its journey slightly and come into Cofton (like the old bus used to) and I could then get safely to school with my friends and we could go home together. I don't mind paying for a ticket if I have to, as long as the price is reasonable. I have heard that other buses may only go to The Hare and Hounds in the future. This means that Cofton Hackett is being by-passed for some reason.

There are a lot of families and school children who live in Cofton. Waseley Hills High school is our designated school. We did not have any other choice of school (as other schools are in the "three tier system", and we all go to Lickey Primary, so we go to senior school when we are 11). We did not qualify to go to Colmers High School as this comes under Birmingham and we are all Hereford and Worcester. Now we cant even get to the school that we are told we have to go to!

I hope that people really realise how difficult and dangerous walking to school will be if we don't have a school bus in Cofton Hackett. I am a fit person who plays lots of sports including football, cycling, golf, snowboarding, skateboarding etc.(cycling to school is not appropriate because of the difficult route and traffic), so I am not an unfit kid who sits on the sofa and hates the thought of walking. I just want to get to and from school safely, concentrate on my lessons and not worry about being hurt on the way home or walking in the cold,dark winter.

I hope that you can help Cllr.Bloore,

Thank you for reading this email

[REDACTED] 12 years old
 (I will be in Year 9 in September, at Waseley Hills High School)

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:54
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: 144 bus service etc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2011 21:25
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: 144 bus service etc

Dear Councillor Bloore,

As promised, I am writing to you regarding the proposed changes to bus services to and from Bromsgrove, in particular the 143 and 144.

I use both of these services and their curtailment at 6pm and 7pm/8.36pm will severely restrict my ability to visit friends and family in Redditch, Birmingham and Worcester.

In addition, in the current economic climate, it would seem likely that this is the first in a series of cutbacks to public transport services, and shows a level of shortsightedness by Worcestershire CC that verges on negligence. Fuel prices will continue to rise. More and more people will be turning to a public transport system that is slowly being eroded and it is therefore unlikely to be fit for purpose. Many people will be stranded at work. Families will become unable to see each other.

For environmental, sustainability and energy-resilience purposes, WCC should be building our public transport system up so that people want to use it more. They need to be asking why people don't use it and taking steps to rectify this. Personally, as an environmentally aware resident, I would happily travel to work by bus, but there is no convenient service between Bromsgrove and Redditch at the time that I require. I often cycle the distance, though. It's no wonder that other, less aware, people don't bother with using the services and continue to use their own cars.

Perhaps Worcestershire CC should be looking at the example set in the West Midlands. There, services are frequent, regular and cheap. As a result of this they are used.

I hope this helps!?

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

BSc (Hons) Environmental Health, PGDip Acoustics and Noise Control, PGCE Secondary Biology.

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:54
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 July 2011 17:20
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject:

Dear Mr Bloore,

I am writing to you as I understand that you are the leader of a task group looking at the implications of the proposed cuts in bus services in the region.

I am an 80 year old resident of [REDACTED]. Unfortunately, I have not been able to drive for the last two years and now realize what an essential life-line the 202/204 bus service is for people living along the Old Birmingham Road. For those not able to walk to the A38 to access the 144 bus service which I understand is being retained, it is the only means of reaching the shopping and other facilities of Bromsgrove or Rubery. Bromsgrove is, of course, an essential hub if one wishes to reach the Alexandra or Princess of Wales Hospitals, or other shopping centres in Redditch or Worcester. From [REDACTED] it is nearly a mile to the 144 bus stop at the Marlbrook Pub, a 20- 25 minute walk, depending on age and fitness. From further up the Lickey, it would be an even longer walk. Many of the 202 bus passengers are elderly and would find the walk to the Marlbrook Pub virtually impossible. I might add that I am quite capable of a 20 minute walk, but many of the elderly users of the 202 service may not be. The difficulty of a 1 mile walk, however, increases quite rapidly with age for those in the 80+ age bracket!

I very much hope that the 202/204 bus service can be retained.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:53
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: The death of the 144

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2011 09:30
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: The death of the 144

Dear Mr Bloore,

I for one am disgusted that WCC have chosen the 144 to be part of its cost cutting exercise. I had lived in Birmingham for 30 years, I work there and I have many friends there. When my wife and I decided to move to a more rural environment we chose Bromsgrove because of its proximity to our old friends and activities and it's bus connection between Birmingham and Worcester. I will no longer be able to visit those friends unless I get the car out. Another consideration in choosing Bromsgrove was that I would be able to commute to work using the bus if the car failed for any reason. This would have required an early start and a late finish but it was 'do-able'. With the proposed cuts this will not be a viable option. I do have a bus pass but I would willingly pay to retain this service and I am sure others would do so too. I am beginning to feel 'trapped' in Bromsgrove as its world contracts around it. Please do what you can to get the 144 service retained in the early mornings and evenings.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:52
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: The Proposed Changes to the 144 Bus Service

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 July 2011 20:50
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: The Proposed Changes to the 144 Bus Service

Hi Chris

I am totally disgusted at the plan to cut the early morning and evening 144 bus service. When I chose to move to Bromsgrove 4 years ago I picked a house on the bus route so that I did not have to rely on travel by car. I am now faced with Bromsgrove being totally isolated after 7pm. This is a terrible state of affairs for those who cannot afford a car.

No thought appears to have been given to those working in retail/hospitality where evening hours are a necessity. Removing evening buses will result in many losing their jobs. Also, it will make life very difficult for students and anyone going to night school. Anyone who wants to reach the nightlife of Birmingham and Worcester has to get an expensive taxi home late at night. In future they will also have to get a taxi there as well which means that an evening out will be prohibitively expensive.

I am alarmed to be faced with living in a 'ghost town' as nobody will be able to reach Bromsgrove in the evenings. Surely this is going to hit the pubs and eateries in Bromsgrove as people just won't be able to afford taxis and nobody wants to drink and drive. For instance, anyone living in Catshill, Droitwich or Rubery just won't be able to reach Bromsgrove and this will have a clear impact on the already struggling Bromsgrove pubs and clubs.

I was alarmed to find out after I moved here that there is absolutely no transport available to get to the Alexandra Hospital in the evenings. Although difficult, it was just possible to reach the hospital by travelling to Birmingham and from there to Redditch, albeit a long and difficult journey. If the evening 144 service is removed anyone without a car will be totally unable to reach the hospital if they have a sick relative unless they are wealthy enough to afford taxis. I find it a disgrace that there is no bus directly to the hospital from Bromsgrove at ANY time and that the Redditch bus does not run in the evenings.

No plans have been made for any sort of compromise, such as a limited service to Longbridge where you could pick up an alternative bus on the Bristol Road or even a shuttle bus to Bromsgrove Station. At present the distance to the station makes it an impossibility for many Bromsgrovians. It would be 40 minute walk for me!

I have written to my MP, Sajid Javid and have had a reply from Andy Baker, Sustainable Transport Manager at Worcs County Council. This reply does not address any of the questions I asked. Basically, I am told that most people would prefer cutting fewer services with reductions elsewhere. This man does not seem to realise that the 144 service is absolutely vital as it is a lifeline to the outside world. Does he really think that non car owners should stay in their houses after 7pm? The evening service is bad enough as it is, running only every hour and a half and to stop it completely is to deny Bromsgrovians any freedom at all. No alternative has been considered, such as charging more. I am sure concessionary passengers, such as myself (due to disability) would be prepared to pay in full or even more, rather than to be housebound after 7pm. I realise that cutting the daytime services to save money is not appropriate as it is only the evening/early bus services that are subsidised.

I would urge you to protest in the strongest terms on behalf of Bromsgrove residents. Sadly, although many are very unhappy at the proposals, they are somewhat apathetic and are not prepared to make their feelings public! To lose the 144 service in the evenings/early mornings will be catastrophic!

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Margaret Sherrey
Sent: 08 August 2011 15:42
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: Bus services task group

Appendix 4

From: Margaret Sherrey
Sent: 08 August 2011 15:41
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: Bus services task group

Good Afternoon Christopher

Replies to some of the questions I was asked at the meeting on 28th July.

Our concerns were discussed with our group as far back as January 2011.

Our concerns were taken back to the County Council by our County Councillors who have been very active during the extended consultation.

There have been some changes thanks to our Conservative County Councillors.

As Cllr P McDonald is a County Councillor I would have thought he would know if the County had carried out an impact assessment as this would surely be part of the process as well as a equality assessment.

When the Bold Program was carried out in Bromsgrove transport came low on priorities with the public that attended.

The removal is of subsidies not bus services by Worcester County Council. The bus companies are responsible for the actual services.

Sorry for delay in replying but we have been with friends over the weekend.

Regards

Margaret



**This report can be provided in
large print, Braille, on audio CD or tape,
or on computer disc.**

"Need help with English?" Contact Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove 01527 881288

'Potrzebujesz pomocy z angielskim?' Skontaktuj się z Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove, tel.: 01527 881288

"İngilizce için yardıma ihtiyacınız var mı?" 01527 881288 numarayı arayıp Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove ile irtibata geçin

"ইংরাজির জন্য সাহায্য চাই ?" 01527 881288 নম্বরে উস্টাশায়ার হাব [HUB] ব্রমসগ্রভ [Bromsgrove]-এ টেলিফোন করুন

"ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੱਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ?" ਵੁਰਸੈਸਟਰਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਹੱਬ [HUB] ਨੂੰ ਬਰੋਮਸਗ੍ਰੋ [Bromsgrove] ਵਿਖੇ 01527 881288 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ

"انگریزی میں مدد چاہتے ہیں؟" ورسیسٹر شائر ہب [HUB]، برومزگرو [Bromsgrove] میں 01527 881288 پر رابطہ کریں



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVING

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

Telephone: (01527) 881288, Fax: (01527) 881414, DX: 17279 Bromsgrove

e-mail: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk