



SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 1 SEPTEMBER 2010

**PRESENTATION OF PETITION ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDING
FOR LOCAL BUS SERVICE 129**

**BRIEFING NOTE OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT**

Introduction

Mrs. R. Johnson will present a petition with 284 signatures couched in the following terms:

“Please honour your policies and local plans to provide improved transport access for rural communities, choice for education, health care, work, recreation. Please be green. Please plan for the future and invest in creating a model transport system to be proud of, that visitors to Leicestershire will enjoy using.

Please retain and improve the 129 bus service, please modify the service to serve schools/work in both towns and go through all the villages the same route each way.

If we had a more frequent bus service I/we/our family would use it.

Please consider including Belton and Osgathorpe on route 126/127 Coalville to Leicester via Loughborough Station thereby providing valuable links for work, education, health and North West Leicestershire District Council.

Please reconsider including Belton and Osgathorpe on service 155 Coalville to NEMA.”

Background

Service 129 is a Monday to Saturday daytime service, provided by Leicestershire County Council and operated under contract by Cresswells Coaches. It operates every 2 hours between Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Loughborough.

As part of the savings required by the County Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the withdrawal of a small number of local bus services, including service 129, was agreed in the Budget process in February this year.

The services were chosen because they fall outside the parameters of the County Council's policy for supported bus services. This is targeted at ensuring a countywide daytime network of bus services to at least an hourly

timetable and within 800 metres of 95% of County residents. The policy provides for alternative, more limited, transport for the remaining 5%.

Service 129 was introduced in June 2008, following the implementation of the Best Value network in the area, to provide transport for 6 villages located more than 800m from the hourly network. Three villages, Breedon on the Hill, Worthington and Newbold, were also included on the route in response to requests from local residents, although they are served by service 155, operating hourly between Coalville, Castle Donington and East Midlands Airport. Service 129 falls outside the policy because of this additionality.

Costs

Service 129 currently costs £81,897 per annum gross; on-bus fares revenue reduces this to a net cost of £67,974.

Around 27,000 passenger journeys are made each year, of which some 22,000 are made without payment using a concessionary travel pass. The concessionary travel scheme budget contributes around £20,500 to the cost of the service each year.

Current position

Service 129 provides the only daily service for six villages: Lount, Griffydam, Osgathorpe, Belton, Nanpantan and Peggs Green. Officers are currently analysing usage from these settlements.

An appropriate transport solution will be designed to meet the essential travel needs of these villages. This could be a scheduled bus service of some sort, or it might be a demand-responsive scheme similar to those already operating successfully elsewhere in Leicestershire.

Given the difficult economic situation currently prevailing, the County Council has no plans to expand the existing supported bus network.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

Mr. J. Coxon CC (Ashby-de-la-Zouch)
Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (Launde)
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC (Shepshed)
Mr. P. G. Lewis CC (Loughborough South West)
Mr. J. Miah CC (Loughborough East)
Mr. D. Slater CC (Loughborough South)

Officer to contact

Tony Kirk, Group Manager – Passenger Transport Unit
Tel: 0116 305 6270
Email: tony.kirk@leics.gov.uk