

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 7 SEPTEMBER 2011**PETITION TO SEEK TO REVERSE CUTS TO ARRIVA BUS SERVICES 152 AND 153
FROM THE BARLESTONE AND NEWBOLD VERDON AREA INTO LEICESTER AND
COALVILLE****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****Purpose of Report**

1. To respond to a petition containing 951 signatures, submitted by Cllr Michael Mullaney and Cllr Bill Crooks of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The petition refers to the service changes for the Arriva 153 bus service (which runs from Market Bosworth to Leicester City) and the abolition of the 152 bus service. There are over 1,000 signatures in the petition and it reads as follows:

“We the undersigned urge the County Council and bus companies to reverse cuts to the bus services covering the Barlestone and Newbold Verdon area. These are vital services to people living in the rural area.”

Background

2. The petition relates to changes to the services in late March 2011 which removed the 152 service between Coalville, Ibstock, Barlestone and Leicester and reduced the early morning departures between Market Bosworth and Leicester. The evening and Sunday 153 service was also withdrawn between Market Bosworth, Barlestone, Newbold Verdon, Desford and Kirby Muxloe into Leicester.

Detail of Services 152 and 153

3. The operation of both services was entirely commercial with no direct financial support from the County Council. Arriva are recompensed for the acceptance of concessionary travel passes used on the service.
4. Service 153 operates Mondays to Saturdays between Market Bosworth, Barlestone, Newbold Verdon, Desford and Kirby Muxloe into Leicester.
5. Arriva reintroduced one morning peak journey on service 152 from Ibstock into Leicester with an evening return for workers.
6. The changes to the services were as a direct result of the downgrading of Arriva's Coalville garage to an outstation in March 2011 and the reduction in concessionary travel reimbursement due to changes in Government guidance. The impact of these two issues was the withdrawal of commercial evening and Sunday services on these routes as well as some early morning departures from Market Bosworth and the link between Market Bosworth, Ibstock and Coalville was withdrawn in late March this year.

7. The County Council, through its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), withdrew all funding for evening and Sunday services in summer 2010 and could not fund the replacement of these journeys.

Local Bus Service Support Policy Review

8. The current bus support policy of the County Council is to provide an hourly, or better, frequency bus service within an 800 metre walk for 95% of Leicestershire residents. For the remaining 5% essential access needs will be provided for.
9. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of the Council identifies budget reductions from the support for local bus services of £500,000 in 2012/13 and a further £500,000 in 2013/14. A Scrutiny Review of the bus support policy will commence in September 2011 with user consultation as part of this review.
10. All supported services will be reassessed against any new bus support policy. However, against the background of the required MTFS savings, it is unlikely that there would be any additional service provision.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Commission:

- (a) considers the information in this report;
- (b) notes that the policy for the support of Local Bus Services is to be the subject of a forthcoming Scrutiny Review Panel;
- (c) notes that specifically the financial support for the provision of evening and Sunday services will be considered in the review.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedure

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Mr. I. D. Ould CC	Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Mr. D. A Sprason CC	Mr. R. Fraser CC
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Background Papers

Petition containing 951 signatures is held in the Chief Executive's Department.

List of Appendices

Appendix – Route for Bus Services 152 and 153