



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)**

PETITION REPORT

**PETITION TO AMEND THE 430/435 BUSES TO THE ORIGINAL
ROAD ROUTE PRIOR TO AUGUST 2010**

28 FEBRUARY 2011

KEY ISSUE

To consider a petition relating to the reinstatement of the original route for local bus services 430/435 in Merstham following changes made in Phase 1 of the County Council's Bus Review.

SUMMARY

A petition has been received, signed by 107 residents (The e-petition which contains 47 signatures has been combined with a paper copy petition containing 60 signatures) with the following heading:

Petition to: Amend the 430/435 buses to the original road route prior to August 2010

Response from the Senior Transport Officer Travel & Transport Group

The County Council is conducting a three-year Bus Review project, being rolled out in phases across the county. The purpose of this is to create a more robust and affordable network of bus services, in a way that aligns with the decreasing level of subsidy funding that we have available and that offers good value for money.

Like all local authorities, Surrey County Council finds itself under increasing budgetary pressure, not just in respect of bus services but also in all areas of services it provides. As a council, we need to make at least 20% expenditure savings over the three-year review and specifically for bus services we are required to reduce our annual spending from £11m to £7m countywide.

Prior to 28 August 2010 the County Council fully subsidised local bus services 430/435. As part of the network changes made in Phase 1 of the Bus Review, Metrobus tendered to operate the majority of these routes commercially, with early morning (06:31-07:01), evenings (19:00-23:33) and Sunday journeys still being subsidised. Overall savings are in excess of £200,000 a year in subsidy costs. However, in order for these routes to be overall commercially viable the number of buses required to operate the services was reduced by two, and the services were rerouted in Merstham.

The revisions on 28 August 2010 have increased journey opportunities with Merstham now having a half hourly direct link to Reigate. When combined with services 420 & 460 the 430 & 435 now provide four buses per hour each way on Mondays to Saturdays between Redhill and Reigate Town Centres.

The changes have provided an improved evening, Sunday and Public Holiday service between Merstham and Redhill and also Woodhatch to Redhill from hourly to two buses per hour. South Park also benefits from 2 buses per hour to Redhill and the changes have reinstated a service to the northern end of Frenches Road in the evenings and on Sundays.

The previous route in Merstham was (see **Annex 1** – separate colour sheet):
Portland Drive, Malmstone Avenue, Radstock Way, Delabole Road

The revised route is (see **Annex 1** – separate colour sheet):
Portland Drive, Malmstone Avenue, Bletchingley Road

By rerouting the services Metrobus were able to continue operating the same level of service between Merstham and Redhill (every 15 minutes) with a direct half hourly service to East Surrey Hospital. A new bus stop has been installed on Malmstone Avenue, near the junction with Delabole Road, to give better access to users in Delabole Road. The revised route has been popular with those living in the Bletchingley Road area who now benefit from having the service closer to them.

The routes now operate as circular services:

430 - Merstham - Redhill - Earlswood - East Surrey Hospital - Whitebushes - Woodhatch - Reigate - Redhill - Merstham

435 - Merstham - Redhill - Reigate - Woodhatch - Whitebushes - East Surrey Hospital - Earlswood - Redhill - Merstham

Since the revised services have been introduced Officers have continued monitoring them. As a result of the difficulties that were identified with reliability Metrobus introduced a revised timetable on 23 October 2010 to improve the overall service. However, since its introduction a number of factors such as adverse weather conditions and roadworks within the area served by these routes have been causing considerable disruption.

Officers propose to keep on file all comments made by the Petitioners with a view to exploring improvements with Metrobus to make further changes commercially when the opportunity arises. To revert the services to the original routes that operated prior to 28 August 2010 would require an additional £200,000 per annum in subsidy costs.