

CABINET MEMBER DECISION

Decision:

Petitions

(i) Details of decision

That the petition responses, attached as annex 1, be approved.

(ii) Reasons for decision

To respond to the petitions.

(iii) Details of any alternative options considered and rejected

None.

(iv) Details of any consultation and representations received not included in the published report

The Cabinet Member opened the floor to questions which were heard and responded by the Cabinet Member and the Officers present.

It was agreed that the County Council would discuss residents' concerns with Abellio to investigate whether there are opportunities for these concerns to be mitigated.

The Cabinet Member further agreed to ensure communication of changes to ticketing arrangement on Surrey buses, specifically around the use of return tickets where there are two different bus service providers operating on the same route.

County Councillor Robert Evens, County Councillor Ian Beardsmore, County Councillor Peter Hickman and Borough Councillor Tricia Bland were present at the meeting.

Conflicts of Interest and any Dispensations Granted

(Any conflict of interest declared by any other Cabinet Member consulted in relation to the decision to be recorded and any dispensations granted by the Audit and Governance Committee)

None.

Decision taken by:

(i) Name: Mike Goodman

(ii) Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Date of Decision: 24 November 2016

Date of Publication of Record of Decision: 25 November 2016

Date decision effective (petitions cannot be called in): 25 November 2016

24 November 2016

Petition Responses**Petition 1**

“Please find enclosed a Petition signed by Whiteley Villagers and supporters who after much discussion have agreed that we in Whiteley Village are in need of a better bus service than the one we currently have, that being the 564 which with its very limited Timetable and regular mechanical breakdowns, is causing many villagers extreme difficulty in arranging and keeping Doctors and Hospital appointments, some having to cancel appointments on the day given due to the bus breaking down. For those of us who for various reasons do not have cars, the 564s limited timetable severely restricts our daily needs and the ability to be part of life outside the village which entails attending meetings, various events, and social occasions, especially evening and weekend ones, without the added expense of taxis many of us cannot afford, bearing in mind that Whiteley Village is a retirement residence predominately for those of limited financial means. Therefore we are asking that when Surrey County Council finds another company to take on the 555 service that Abellio are withdrawing from, that IT will then reschedule the 555 to start and terminate at Whiteley Village and for the 564 to start and terminate at Hersham Green. Whiteley Village has recently rebuilt and improved its own bus stop which stops outside the Village Store where drivers can buy refreshments, some hot, and use a toilet, and there is parking spaces for the changeover of drivers. There are also spaces in the village where the Drivers can park and eat a packed lunch. As I have said in the enclosed Notice for the Petition, the 555 is one of the best routes we have in this area of Surrey, and for those of us in Whiteley Village it will give us, at its bus stops between the Village and Walton, better connections to other destinations in particular to St Peters Hospital where many of our residents go for treatment both as In and Out – Patients and a direct service to Ashford Hospital, Heathrow Airport and the National Express Coach Service. The 555s direct service to Walton Station (which Villagers prefer to use) would be much better for us in Whiteley Village and for people visiting us. It has good access to the platforms, is well sheltered and with the 555s later timetable will bring us back into the village and save us the additional expense of taxis we at present have to use, especially at weekends. Hersham station via the 564 is not a good station for many villagers of visitors due to its long steep flight of stairs, very exposed platforms and the last bus from it to Whiteley Village is at 6.06pm, therefore when having to come back later means a taxi back to the Village; and of course there being no Sunday service, means taxis both ways. There are those of us in Whiteley Village who, as individuals, feel increasingly isolated in our ability to be part of and attend events, meetings, and social occasions, outside of the village especially in the evenings and weekends. Also there are those, who having given up driving, are reconsidering the need of a car they really don't want or can ill afford. This could eventually lead to more people coming into the village with cars when being told that there is such a limited bus service, and this will inevitably add to the traffic on our already congested roads outside the village and traffic jams and disruptions to all the bus services, especially when Whiteley Village completes its impending extensions of Housing, Care Centre, and Welfare buildings

possibly resulting in more employees, some of whom may not have cars and will therefore need a bus such as the 555, with its half hourly service later time table, and weekend service to connect with and bring them to and from the village. Therefore Mr Goodman we ask that you support us in our request to reschedule the 555 bus to start and terminate at Whiteley Village and for the 564 to start and terminate at Hersham Green.

Submitted by Linda Roth

Signatures: 384

Response

Thank you for your petition in relation to the bus provision in Whiteley Village, in particular the Abellio 555 service and the suggestion of amending the route to start/ terminate at Whiteley Village and the 564 to start/ terminate at Hersham Green.

As you quite rightly point out, and as announced previously by Surrey County Council (SCC), Abellio have made a decision to resign from some of their bus contracts administered by SCC and to change some of their other services. This is their prerogative and was solely Abellio's decision to take. Since then, officers have worked hard to lead the process of arranging replacement services, which have been planned to integrate with continuing Abellio services.

No offers have been received from other bus operators to run these services on a commercial, or non-subsidised, basis, and the new arrangements will require significantly more funding than originally paid by us to Abellio. This needs to be understood in the context of a very challenging position financially for the council, with rising costs and increased demand on key services, especially within adult social care. It has not been possible to cover every part of the Abellio network or maintain all existing frequencies, as we have had to make some compromises. However, the council has worked extremely hard to obtain additional funding for the replacement services and the bulk of the strategic network in the North West of Surrey will be largely secured. With SCC stepping in, this will ensure that residents and bus users are still able to use the bus services which matter most to them to get to places of work, education, shopping and medical appointments.

In regards to the bus service 564 in particular, we are pleased to confirm that the buses will run every 60 minutes, as opposed to every 80 minutes as it currently does, providing users with a more frequent and reliable service. Considering service 555, it will not be possible to alter the route to start/ terminate at Whiteley Village, as this would add approximately 10 minutes to the journey. Doing so would have an adverse effect upon the reliability of this service, requiring an additional vehicle to be inserted into the operation, something we cannot afford to do. Timetables have yet to be produced, but this information will be made publically available as soon as possible.

Mike Goodman
Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
24 November 2016

Petition 2

“We, the undersigned, protest at the proposed cuts to the 514, 515 and 458 bus services which will mean that Thames Ditton and Weston Green will have no bus services from 1st January 2017. We petition Surrey County Council to take urgent action to ensure these essential bus services continue after 1st January 2017 – as they are vital for the wellbeing of the community, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities, most of whom have no alternative forms of transport.”

Submitted by Peter Hickman

Signatures: 2102

Response

Thank you for your petition relating to changes to services 514, 515 and 458 within the Thames Ditton and Weston Green area.

As you may know, and as announced previously by Surrey County Council (SCC), Abellio have made a decision to resign from some of their bus contracts administered by SCC and to change some of their other services. This is their prerogative and was solely Abellio's decision to take. Since then, officers have worked hard to lead the process of arranging replacement services, which have been planned to integrate with continuing Abellio services.

No offers have been received from other bus operators to run these services on a commercial, or non-subsidised, basis, and the new arrangements will require significantly more funding than originally paid by us to Abellio. This needs to be understood in the context of a very challenging position financially for the council, with rising costs and increased demand on key services, especially within adult social care. It has not been possible to cover every part of the Abellio network or maintain all existing frequencies, as we have had to make some compromises. However, the council has worked extremely hard to obtain additional funding for the replacement services and the bulk of the strategic network in the North West of Surrey will be largely secured. With SCC stepping in, this will ensure that residents and bus users are still able to use the bus services which matter most to them to get to places of work, education, shopping and medical appointments.

In regards to the service provision to Thames Ditton and Weston Green, approximately three buses an hour will serve these areas to Kingston-Upon-Thames. Whilst service 514 will be withdrawn, it is envisaged that key journeys will be continued by another operator from Kingston-Upon-Thames to Hersham and vice versa in the morning and afternoon, with an afternoon journey commencing at Esher High School via Hersham to Kingston-Upon-Thames; these journeys will operate between Winters Bridge and Kingston-Upon-Thames via Portsmouth Road direct.

A revised service 513 Monday to Friday will be diverted between Weston Green and Kingston-Upon-Thames, via Thames Ditton Village, Winters Bridge and Portsmouth

Road, which will provide residents in these areas with an additional travel choice. A revised service 515 will operate Mondays to Saturdays, generally hourly with some exceptions, from Field Common Estate to Kingston-Upon-Thames and will serve Thames Ditton, Winters Bridge and Portsmouth Road. On Sundays, a new service will operate between Guildford and Kingston-Upon-Thames, which will serve Thames Ditton every 90 minutes, offering an alternative for Sunday travel. London Bus service 411 and Abellio service 461 will continue to offer alternative bus travel options to and from East/ West Molesey and Kingston-Upon-Thames. Timetables have yet to be produced, but this information will be made publically available as soon as possible.

Mike Goodman

Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

24 November 2016

Petition 3

“As of 31st December 2016, Abellio Surrey are cutting back or withdrawing a lot of their services. These include services to and from Heathrow, as well as transport links to schools, colleges and towns around Surrey, as well as St Peters Hospital. As if transport wasn't already difficult for students, workers, and those unable to drive, we are now faced with another challenge. Please help us to keep our bus services, as they are a vital part of everyday life.”

Submitted by: Jasmine Ritchie

Signatures: 3254

Response

Thank you for your petition concerning changes to Abellio services, including those to and from Heathrow Airport and transport links to schools, colleges and towns around Surrey, as well as to St Peters Hospital.

As you may know, and as announced previously by Surrey County Council (SCC), Abellio have made a decision to resign from some of their bus contracts administered by SCC and to change some of their other services. This is their prerogative and was solely Abellio's decision to take. Since then, officers have worked hard to lead the process of arranging replacement services, which have been planned to integrate with continuing Abellio services.

No offers have been received from other bus operators to run these services on a commercial, or non-subsidised, basis, and the new arrangements will require significantly more funding than originally paid by us to Abellio. This needs to be understood in the context of a very challenging position financially for the council, with rising costs and increased demand on key services, especially within adult social care. It has not been possible to cover every part of the Abellio network or maintain all existing frequencies, as we have had to make some compromises. However, the council has worked extremely hard to obtain additional funding for the replacement services and the bulk of the strategic network in the North West of Surrey will be largely secured. With SCC stepping in, this will ensure that residents and bus users are still able to use the bus services which matter most to them to get to places of work, education, shopping and medical appointments.

In regards to bus travel links to Heathrow Airport, we can confirm that the Abellio service 441 Englefield to Heathrow Airport Central will continue to run on a commercial basis at the same level, but with some amendments to the timetable to improve reliability. A new service will also operate between Staines and Heathrow Terminal 5 Mondays to Saturdays approximately every 90 minutes. In regards to the service 555, it is expected that a service will still operate approximately every 60 minutes from Hersham Green to the Heathrow area. However, discussions with Heathrow Airport, a key stakeholder SCC is in constant engagement with, have not concluded as to the frequency of the service, period of day covered, the route in the

airport area or funding support required to maintain this service. A further announcement will be made as soon as it is possible to do so.

Mr Mike Goodman

Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

24 November 2016

Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning decision meeting
24 November 2016

Present

Mike Goodman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Paul Millin, Travel and Transport Group Manager

Laurie James, Business Service Planning Team Manager

Joss Butler, Committee Assistant

Summary of the discussion

The Cabinet Member introduced the three petitions and gave residents a brief summary of the serious financial restraints that the County Council was under. It was explained that Officers had worked closely with Abellio to mitigate the effects of the reduction to bus services but it had not been possible to maintain bus services at their existing level. The response provided by the Cabinet Member to each of the three petitions was circulated to those in attendance at the meeting.

The Cabinet Member introduced the first petition and the Petition Leader was given three minutes to speak. The Petition Leader raised concerns over disturbance in travel in Whitely Village caused by the Abellio bus cuts and gave details of the negative effects that this would have on its local residents. The Petition Leader urged the Cabinet Member to reconsider the proposals laid out in the response and asked officers to find a way to bring the 555 bus service into Whitely Village. The Cabinet Member responded to the Petition Leader's comments by stating that he fully understood residents' concerns and would continue to investigate to try and find a solution. The Cabinet Member also emphasised the severe financial challenges faced by the County Council.

The Cabinet Member introduced the second petition and the Petition Leader was given three minutes to speak. Tricia Bland, Elmbridge Borough Councillor spoke on the Petition Leader's behalf. Ms Bland expressed disappointment that not enough time had been provided to consider the response and that the timing of the meeting prohibited some residents from attending. The petitioner was informed that the response had only been signed off the previous day and so officers were unable to circulate the response before then. Concerns were raised over the lack of bus service provision from Thames Ditton to Surbiton as outlined in the response to the petition which was circulated at the meeting. Ms Bland further highlighted the detrimental effects of reducing bus services for those who relied upon them to reach work, hospitals or schools. The Cabinet Member stressed that Officers had maintained bus services as best they could with the funding that was available. The Cabinet Member opened the floor to questions which were heard and responded by the Cabinet Member and the officers present.

The Cabinet Member introduced the final petition and informed the Petition Leader that they had the right to speak for three minutes. The Petition Leader thanked the Cabinet Member and Officers for the work that had had been done in restoring some of the bus services but

highlighted that the bus service was used by all age groups which meant that these changes would affect everyone. The Cabinet Member acknowledged this and went on to inform residents that the County Council was working with the University of Surrey on a project looking at ways that more people can be encouraged to use buses, to make services more commercially viable. The Cabinet Member opened the floor to questions which were heard and responded by the Cabinet Member and the officers present.