

Abellio Surrey

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Mr Richard Walsh
Chairman
SCC Local Committee (Spelthorne)
Council Offices
West Entrance
Knowle Green
Staines
TW18 1XA

29th April 2014

Dear Mr Walsh

Bus Route 441 and Stanwell Moor Village

Thank you for your letter of 10th April 2014 in relation to the changes to Abellio Surrey bus services which have affected residents in Stanwell Moor.

The changes were introduced in order to significantly improve the reliability and sustainability of our bus services in Surrey and are part of a widespread package of improvements we are introducing to improve bus services for residents of Surrey, which includes half price travel for all under 20s, free wifi, real-time passenger information on mobile phones, tablets and other such devices, 'next stop' announcements, upgraded vehicles and improved ticketing options.

We spent a long time planning these changes and considered many options as part of this process, including discussions with key stakeholders such as Surrey County Council and Bus Users UK. The reason that we have needed to make the changes on route 441 is that buses on this route require more time to complete their journey than was previously allowed in the timetable, due to increasing volumes of traffic. As a result, the route was becoming unreliable and we needed to take action to ensure the buses run on time as required in our obligations to the Traffic Commissioner.

We made details of our proposed changes public in late January via the web, road shows and posters on the buses and asked for comments to be submitted in respect of these. I am sorry to note that the residents of Stanwell Moor felt they were not made aware of these change but, although we were only able to offer a short period of consultation, we did receive a number of comments from residents of the village.

We considered a wide array of options in order to allow the route to carry on serving the village but, in order to leave the route unchanged, we would have needed to invest in an additional bus to operate the service. This would have amounted to an investment of more than £100,000 each year, which could not be sustained through increased revenue. Whilst the route was used from the village, the levels were relatively low and we therefore looked at other ways we could continue to serve it whilst providing 441 with the time it needs to undertake its journey.

As a result, we took the decision to divert route 441 away from the village and I am very sorry that we are not able to offer an option whereby it would continue to service Stanwell Moor. The change was a difficult decision for us to make and in order to ensure that Stanwell Moor retained a bus service, route 557 was diverted to serve the village and then continue to Heathrow Terminal 5. Whilst we accept this is a reduced level of service compared to the 441, the route will provide links to Heathrow and Ashford. Routes 590 and 591 continue to provide a service between Stanwell Moor and Staines.

We also discussed the impact of the changes with Heathrow Airport and I am pleased to confirm that the Heathrow free fares zone will be extended out to Stanwell Moor village from 1st May, meaning that residents will be able to travel between Heathrow Airport and the village at no cost on both the 557 and 441.

The overall changes to the network were needed to ensure that we can deliver a reliable bus network for all our customers and firmly believe the alterations made will deliver this. We also believe that the revisions will strengthen our network of services and improve patronage to provide a strong backbone of routes. It is hoped that this will allow us to further develop services and improve frequencies in future at a reduced level of taxpayer subsidy as compared to that currently required to support bus services in Surrey.

We will closely monitor the changes but, as things stand, we do not see a position whereby we could sustainably restore the 441 to Stanwell Moor Village.

With regard to the safety point you make in respect of crossing the dual carriageway and having suitable facilities for waiting, I would thoroughly agree with your proposal and trust that you will be able to influence internal SCC sources to get the appropriate infrastructure in place as a matter of urgency.

I hope that the above provides some further insight into our reasons for the changes and if you would like any further information, please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Tony Wilson
Managing Director