

Surrey County Council Local Transport Review

Meeting of Cabinet, 23 June 2015

Petitions and Further Refinement of Local Bus Services

1. Following the closure of both the first consultation in February and the second consultation in June four petitions have been received relating to specific bus service changes. Although all four petitions missed the consultation deadline and the formal deadline for reporting to Cabinet, given that key decisions are to be taken on bus services by Cabinet it is important that the views of residents are not lost, but are heard and listened too.
2. A summary of the four petitions and what we are doing is set out below.
3. In addition, further refinement of bus service proposals has taken place following continued discussion with bus operators and key stakeholders, as noted below. Officers continue to review the comments from the second consultation and there may still be minor adjustments to those published.

Petition - Bus Route 22

4. A petition has been received from residents of Mole Valley and their representatives, with 187 signatures.
5. The key objection raised is the removal of the 22 bus service on a Saturday as it would isolate several communities in the south of Mole Valley District.
6. In considering this, it is proposed that the Mole Valley Demand Responsive Service (Buses4U DRT) will be extended to operate on Saturdays. Residents who currently use Metrobus service 22, from areas not served by conventional bus services such as Newdigate, Leigh, Chart Downs, Sutton Abinger, Holmbury St Mary and Abinger Common, will be able to book journeys in advance on the DRT service by phoning the call centre. The service will be operated by East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership who operate the Monday to Friday DRT service in Mole Valley. The service will be open to all Mole Valley residents who don't have access to other bus services and will provide an alternative for the Metrobus service 22 whilst also providing new transport opportunities.
7. Publicity will be produced in advance of the service starting and will be sent out to Members, Parish Councils, Resident Groups etc who can assist in publicising the service by including information in any newsletters and on websites.

Petition - Bus Route 557 (Shepperton)

8. A petition has been received from residents of Shepperton and their representatives, which has 415 signatures.
9. The key objection raised is that the direct bus from Shepperton to St. Peter's Hospital would be broken, requiring a change of bus en-route.
10. In response we have worked hard with the operator of this service, Abellio to develop a revised route for service 557 so that it can include St. Peter's Hospital and maintain the direct link, whilst still making a saving in subsidy. The modified 557 would also retain a direct hospital link from Sunbury, New Haw, West Byfleet and Sheerwater.
11. Agreement with Abellio should be confirmed shortly, securing a revised 557 for a further year. Officers will work with local communities and Members to grow patronage on this route. However, if the patronage to and from the hospital from these locations does not increase we may have to review the service again in 2016.

Petition - Bus Route 557 (Stanwell Moor)

12. A petition has been received from residents of Stanwell Moor and their representatives, which has 691 signatures.
13. The key objection raised is that the changes would mean residents having to walk to a bus stop across a busy dual carriageway to access key local bus services.
14. The Cabinet Member, accompanied by Officers met County Councillor Robert Evans and Borough Councillor Sue Doran in the village on Friday 19 June. A tour of the village and discussion of issues with several residents took place. It is recognised by all that the 557 service is not well used by residents of the village. An average daily total of only 8 return journeys are undertaken on the 557 from the village itself. Yet local bus access to key services is an issue. What residents would like is the resumption of Abellio's commercial service of 441 through the village.
15. However, there is no easy solution. Officers will discuss the 441 situation with Abellio again and determine if any alternative options are available.

Petition - Bus Route 564

16. A petition has been received from residents of Walton on Thames and other locations. The petition has 371 signatures.
17. The key objection raised is the withdrawal of the service between Walton town centre, Vicarage Fields Estate and Xcel Centre, with replacement by a less-frequent service 400 on Mondays to Fridays only.

18. The proposal to run service 564 between Whiteley Village and Walton town centre every 60 minutes on Mondays to Saturdays, is to be modified so that the full route is restored Mondays to Saturdays, but operating every 70 minutes through the day.

Bus Links to St Peter's Hospital

19. Following further discussions with Abellio and the Hospital Trust, on route 446, Abellio has agreed to modify their proposed hourly daily commercial service 446 (Woking-St. Peter's Hospital-Staines) by extending it to Ashford Hospital at no cost to the Council. This will preserve the link between the two hospitals which is currently provided by service 557.
20. Working with Abellio we will begin a joint initiative with the Ashford-St. Peter's Hospital Trust to promote all bus travel options to both hospitals, with the aim of growing patronage and helping services to be more sustainable in the longer term.