

## County Councillor Questions for the Cabinet on 6 December 2017

Question from Cllr Nick Ireland to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to the #5 Bus Service serving Linden Lea

### Question

In light of the decision by First Bus Wessex to withdraw their #5 service from the end of January 2018, do the Cabinet agree that the loss of a route that serves a major proportion of the population of rural Linden Lea and provides them with their only daily public transport means of accessing the shops, services and facilities of both Dorchester and Weymouth needs to be urgently addressed and will they outline the steps are they taking to ensure the needs and requirements of the many without access to private transport will continue to be met in the absence of any meaningful community transport alternatives?

### Answer

Cllr Ireland thank you for your question regarding Public Transport in relation to Service 5.

Members may or may not be aware that this service was previously subsidised. First Group Wessex registered this as a commercial service. The County Council worked very hard with First to try and make the Service 5 commercial. We helped by giving entitled scholars passes on the route, rather than a closed school contract, which we have been successful in other parts of the County. Unfortunately this has not been proven to be commercially viable. It is First's decision in the end.

The Service 5 is no longer part of the core transport subsidised network which has been agreed by the County Council. So would not have continued to receive subsidy after First's decision to deregister.

We are now working with an alternative provider so that the entitled children transported by the Service 5 now fall within our existing 'One School One Operator' (OSOO) contractor and then ask the commercial company to provide the necessary transport for school.

Members may not be aware but there are a number of Public Transport options for these communities:

- **Osmington** and **Warmwell** are served by Service X54.
- Dorset Community Transport provides a PlusBus service to and from Dorchester every Wednesday that starts at Bovington area approx. 9.30am via villages including Wool, Lulworth, Winfrith Newburgh, **Warmwell** and **West Stafford**. Return journey departs 1.15pm.

Tel: 01258 287980 (between 9.30am and 2.30pm Monday to Friday) or email [dorset@ectcharity.co.uk](mailto:dorset@ectcharity.co.uk). Once registered, trips can be booked up to 2 weeks in advance but no later than 2.30pm the previous working day.

Most PlusBus services charge a fixed return fare of £5. PlusBus are unable to accept the National Concessionary Bus Pass.

- The County Councils Dorchester Dial-a-Bus serves **Crossways** and **Broadmayne** but is currently only available for those whose GP has signed a form confirming they

are unable to use public transport. As there will be no access to public transport in these areas, we are now looking to widen this scheme to allow the community to access this service and whether it can be extended to cover **Whitcombe** on its route to Dorchester, if required.

The DAB service operates on Wednesdays and gives approx. 2 hours maximum in Dorchester. You need to register initially to use the service. Fares are up to £3 return, depending on journey plus a £1 initial registration fee.

A maximum of 10 seats are available on the existing vehicle but the Fleet Operations Manager in Dorset Transport will explore the possibility of using a 16 seater if demand is greater. However, a larger number of pick-ups would impact on the amount of time available for passengers to spend in Dorchester.

Dorset County Council has also produced a Community Transport Toolkit to help rural communities develop different transport solutions tailored to the needs of the residents, enabling access to many essential and leisure services. There is already a wide range of schemes in the county, from car-sharing to community minibuses.

This guide will help communities to decide which option best suits their needs and to understand how schemes can be implemented.

[https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/213263/Community-Transport-Toolkit/pdf/Community\\_Transport\\_Toolkit\\_for\\_Dorset\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/media/213263/Community-Transport-Toolkit/pdf/Community_Transport_Toolkit_for_Dorset_-_final.pdf)

I hope you will see that we have alternatives already in place for these communities and Officer's within Dorset Travel are of course willing to further engage with all Members of the County Council if there are particular issues.