

Public Questions for the Cabinet meeting on 17 January 2018

Questions from Ms Linda Thompson to the Cabinet Member for Natural and Built Environment in relation to the No. 5 Bus Service between Crossways, Broadmayne, West Knighton and Dorchester

Questions

1. Why was route extended to cover Weymouth when there was an existing regular service covering Dorchester to Weymouth?
2. Was there no clause in the business plan / contract safeguarding this service for minimum of a year to obtain true figures?
3. Were user audits carried out over various weekdays and times of day?
(I was told by First that they were ending the service as 'fewer people were using the bus'. As a regular passenger I saw the opposite!)
4. We're told people can use community transport to get to hospital appointments in the absence of a bus, and that schoolchildren will be covered – what about those who work?

Answer

1. The decision to extend the new #5 is commercial and meets the Passenger Transport Strategy and New Contract model objectives of using school movement to underpin services and operators taking commercial decision to develop the route where they see them financially viable.
2. First took the commercial decision to take over a route which was not due for renewal in the retender process. The council do not franchise public transport routes, so growth is down to commercial operators and the communities to use this.

The new #5 is a commercial venture (outside of the school time, school day movement) and the ability to maintain the service in the long term lies with the communities it serves, by using the service and assisting its financial viability

3. First use digital ticket machines and have data for each individual journey by fare type, concessionary, fare payer and season ticket holder. This is their commercial information. The data from First showed a decline in patronage and the changes all operators make between winter and summer timetables reflects seasonal passenger demand
4. The decision to remove the service highlights it is not commercial. Communities are encouraged to consider what travel solutions already existing in communities for workers who currently drive in single occupancy cars and if they would share. Tools such as carsharedorset.com or speaking with their employers about workplace travel plans or other initiatives available are encouraged.

It is also worth noting that the X54 which serves Owermoigne, Poxwell and Osmington has in the previous year's been withdrawn over the winter period. The work Dorset Travel undertook with the entitled flow into Purbeck School has secured this as an all year round service.