

# County Council

## Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	9 November 2017
Officer	Chris Hook, Dorset Travel Service Manager
Subject of Report	<b>Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’</b>
Executive Summary	<p>A petition has been received in accordance with the County Council’s published petitions scheme in relation the deregistration of the Service 40 which operated Monday to Saturday.</p> <p>A new Service 6 between Bridport and Beaminster has commenced and operates Monday to Friday on a commercial basis. The in house fleet is currently providing a solution from Beaminster to Yeovil financially supported by Yeovil College as Service 40.</p> <p>During the period 29 July to 21 October, a Community Bus Service CB3 operated Saturdays between Beaminster and Bridport offering 4 return trips per day. This was supported with a Community Transport Grant to Bridport and Beaminster Town Councils which has been exhausted.</p> <p>The Petition contains more than 1000 signatures and is therefore referred to the County Council to consider and respond.</p> <p>The petition has been presented and is in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan reducing public transport subsidy by £1.5m (£500k 2016/17 and £1m 2017/18).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The petition requests that Dorset County Council maintain support for a Saturday service, serving Bridport – Beamsinter – Crewkerne – Yeovil (including the villages along the route which operated until 22 July 2017).</li></ul> <p>Six supported services were awarded in July 2017 with subsidy for Monday – Friday. Five of these services have Saturday included in the timetable on a commercial bases.</p>

Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’

	<p>The remaining contract with support for Saturdays (Blandford to Dorchester) ceases at the end of the year.</p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p>	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>Full EqIA and Screening completed.</p> <p>The loss of bus services can significantly impact those affected. Negative impacts have been identified for younger people, for disabled people and for older people, particularly older women, as people in these groups are more likely to use passenger transport services.</p> <p>The replacement contract for schools and public transport (Contract: DN245509) seeks to mitigate the reduction of public transport subsidy by implementing open schools routes, in-fill services and increasing community transport coverage. Dorset Travel will continue to engage with local communities and with existing community transport schemes seeking to further develop services and to prioritise those areas with unmet needs.</p> <p>The full Equality Impact Assessment is available upon request.</p> <p>Use of Evidence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Public &amp; Schools Transport Review Public Consultation Response Reports – DCC August 2016;</li> <li>b. Public &amp; Schools Transport Review Full EqIA – DCC Oct 2016</li> <li>c. New Contract Model for Passenger Transport Business Case – the TAS Partnership Oct 2016;</li> <li>d. New Contract Model For Passenger Transport – Procurement Options Report – TAS Oct 2016; D</li> <li>e. Dorset Travel Market Engagement Event – DCC Hosted Oct 2016.</li> <li>f. T102 Contract for Passenger Transport Services – DCC Feb 2012.</li> </ol> <p>Budget:</p> <p>Reduction in budget of £1m to be achieved 2017/18. This is part of the £18.3m savings required to balance the County Council’s budget in 2017/18.</p> <p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council’s approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:          Current Risk: HIGH          Residual Risk LOW</p>

Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’

	<p>Risk of not reducing public transport budget would impact on delivery of key services.</p> <p>Other Implications: Nil.</p>
Recommendation	The County Council is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it.
Reason for Recommendation	In order to comply with the County Council’s published scheme for responding to petitions and so as to enable local people to connect with local elected decision makers.
Appendices	None.
Background Papers	<p>Dorset County Council Petitions Scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cabinet: 24 February 2017 – item 35 Rural Bus Services Review</li> <li>- Cabinet: 11 February 2017 – approval of Passenger Transport Strategy 2011-2026</li> <li>- Cabinet: 11 February 2017 – Medium Term Financial Plan: Appendix 2 – Economy &amp; Environment Savings Measures</li> </ul>
Officer Contact	<p>Name: Chris Hook          Tel: 01305 225141          Email: c.p.hook@dorsetcc.gov.uk</p>

## **Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’**

### **1. Background to the Petition Scheme**

- 1.1 The County Council’s Petitions Scheme was adopted on 29 April 2010 and came into effect on 15 June 2010. The Scheme was subsequently updated by the County Council on 21 July 2016.
- 1.2 If a petition is supported by 50 or more signatories then it will be dealt with by a small customer focussed panel. If a petition is supported by 1,000 or more signatories it will be scheduled for a debate at the next meeting of the full County Council.

### **2. Petition – ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’**

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by Mrs C Emmett. This reads as follows:
  - We, the undersigned, are asking Dorset County Council to maintain support for the Saturday bus service number 40 (Bridport – Beaminster – Crewkerne – Yeovil) to enable residents along its route to access Crewkerne Station and to carry out their business in Bridport and Yeovil (1406 signatures).
- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 1000 signatures, the Council is invited to consider it. This discussion should conclude with a decision as to how to respond to the petition. This may include one or more of the following:
  - taking the action requested in the petition
  - considering the petition at a council meeting
  - holding an inquiry into the matter
  - undertaking research into the matter
  - holding a public meeting
  - holding a consultation
  - referring the petition for consideration by the council’s audit and governance committee
  - calling a referendum
  - writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition.
- 2.3 Alternatively, the Council may determine a combination of the options above, or decide on another course of action as appropriate.

### **3. Context**

- 3.1 Supported public bus services were procured under the T102 commencing in 2011. There were 72 services with an aggregate annual cost of £3.5million, which includes approximately £700,000 contribution from the mainstream school transport budget for school transport undertaken on supported public services. All contracts expired in July 2017. Supported public services account for only 9% of passenger journeys in Dorset.
- 3.2 The County Council’s legal duty for subsidised buses is to identify where public transport is needed but is not being provided and, once identified, secure appropriate services. The Council is not obliged to subsidise services and may take into account the funds that are available to them. The Council is also required by law to:

## **Procedure for Petitions – Petition entitled ‘Maintain the Saturday bus service from Yeovil to Bridport’**

- a. Take into account the transport needs of those who are elderly or disabled;
  - b. Work with other councils concerned with public transport;
  - c. Work with other councils regarding school and social care transport, to ensure best value for money for these services; and,
  - d. Take into account the needs of the public and bus companies.
- 3.3 The Council’s legal duty for subsidised buses is to identify where passenger transport network within budgetary constraints, whilst delivering corporate outcomes and meeting the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. For the rural areas the Passenger Transport Strategy envisions a core network of high quality inter-urban routes linking the market towns, with access from surrounding villages by demand-driven community transport offers, and by integrating some school services into public provision.
- 3.4 A comprehensive consultation was undertaken from 27 May to 22 July 2016. The consultation described the need to reduce the combined budgets for mainstream school and public transport by £1.85million from 2017/18 in addition to the £500,000 in 2016/17.
- 3.5 The consultation generated 2605 responses. Respondents were asked whether they agreed with the proposed approach to focus on maintaining core bus routes that serve the most people (inter-urban services) whilst opening up school buses and supporting community transport in rural areas that may lose their bus. 54% of respondents agreed with this approach compared with 27% who did not agree.

**Matthew Piles**  
**Service Director – Economy**  
November 2017