

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

11 MARCH 2015

WINCHESTER EVENING BUS SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ENVIRONMENT)

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RECENT REFERENCES:

WTF179 – Winchester Night Bus – 12 September 2014

WTF194 – Winchester Evening Bus Service – 11 September 2013

WTF201 – Winchester Town Evening Bus Service – 12 March 2014

WTF203 - Winchester Town Evening Bus Service Update - 25 June 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At the meeting held on 25 June 2014 the Town Forum resolved to support the continuation of the evening bus service beyond September 2014 for a further period of 2 years.

This report updates the Forum on the Patronage and use of the late evening bus service linking the City Centre with Badger Farm, Stanmore, Weeke and Harestock (the night bus) Thursday to Saturday.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the report be noted.

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DETAIL:

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Town Forum decided in 2012 to support an evening bus service between the city centre and Badger Farm, Stanmore, Weeke and Harestock on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and made provision for this in its budgets for 12/13 and 13/14.
- 1.2 In March 2014 the Forum resolved to support, in principle, the continuation of the service for a further 2 year period (beyond September 2014) and asked Hampshire County Council (HCC) to tender the service on this basis and in June 2014 the Forum agreed to run the service for a further two years from September 2014
- 1.3 In October 2014 Hampshire County Council announced the results of its review on supported public transport services. In Winchester this has resulted in the loss of most evening bus services after 19.30. These cuts only came into effect at the start of January 2015, so the impact on the Night bus service may still not be clear.
- 1.4 The service has now been in operation for 28 months and details of passenger numbers up to the end of January 2015 are included at Appendix A. It carried 5560 passengers in 2013 and 6213 passengers in 2014, with an average loading of six passengers per bus trip. The most popular four services being run on Friday evenings. Average passenger numbers per journey range from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 10. Overall the service 5A averages 7 passengers per journey compared to 5 passengers for service 3.
- 1.5 Whilst there has been a 11% increase in numbers from 2013 to 2014, the low overall loading figure means that the service is never likely to cover its costs and become commercially viable. The cost per passengers' journey has decreased slightly in 2014 (£2.16) compared with 2013 (£2.37) and 2012 (£2.31). Despite this trend the data suggests that the service is unlikely to develop to a point where it attracts enough passengers to be commercially viable and will no longer require a subsidy. Following withdrawal of subsidies by the County Council in January this year many other evening services stopped because operators could both operate them on a commercial basis.

- 1.6 As these services are night buses the main usage is for social purposes (82%). Most of the other journeys were for employment purposes (17%) with educational use at just 1%. Most passengers (86%) were travelling out from Winchester, with 9% travelling into Winchester and 5% of passengers travelling between the outlying estates.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

2 COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 The service will contribute towards Community and Economic objectives by providing a service which local people can use to access restaurants and Public Houses thus benefitting the evening economy and improving accessibility.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 A £13,390 budget has been approved for the night bus service in the Winchester Town Account budget for 14/15. The contract runs for two years from September 2014 (unless either party decides to terminate early) and will be subject to inflationary uplifts which are already included in the Town Account budget projections for 15/16 and 16/17.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Discontinuing the service could impact upon the city's night time economy and users of the service, albeit the impact is likely to be low given the limited use of the service.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Winchester Night Bus Patronage September 2012 to January 2015

Appendix A - Winchester Night Bus Patronage - September 2012 to January 2015

Summary Statistics

- 76 maximum daily passengers carried (all services)
- 7 minimum daily passengers carried (all services)
- 38 Average daily passengers carried (all services)
- 5560 Total passengers carried in 2013
- 6213 Total passengers carried in 2014
- 6 average passengers carried per bus
- 5 average passengers carried on No. 3 service
- 7 average passengers carried on No. 5A service

Summary by Service over whole contract period	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
	2210	2310	0010	2135	2235	2335
	2215	2315	0015	2140	2240	2340
Average Thurs. passenger numbers	5	5	2	7	6	5
Average Friday passenger numbers	8	7	5	8	9	10
Average Sat. passenger numbers	7	4	4	7	7	7
Average No. of passengers per week	20	16	11	23	22	22
Average No. of passengers per bus	7	5	4	8	7	7