

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER NIGHT BUS SERVICE UPDATE

28 MARCH 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE HEAD OF REGULATORY:

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WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

In June 2016 (WTF241 refers) the Town Forum resolved to support the funding of its Winchester nightbus service for a further period of 2 years with a new contract commencing in September of that year with the option to extend the contract by a further period of 12 months. The contract is let through Hampshire County Council and the service delivered by Stagecoach.

The current contract will therefore expire in September 2018 and the Town Forum needs to decide whether to continue to support the nightbus financially for an additional 12 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Town Forum decides whether to continue to support the funding of the Winchester nightbus service by extending the existing contract for a further period of 12 months from September 2018.

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 Supporting public transport services is consistent with improving the quality of the district's environment and, in particular, reducing harmful emissions through holistic transport planning.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Town Forum has made provision in the Town Account for the continued funding of the nightbus as a recurring item with a budget of £12.7k for 18/19. In addition the parishes of Badger Farm and Littleton and Harestock agreed to make a contribution of £500 each to support the service in 2017 and will be approached again to see if they are willing to do the same for 18/19.
- 2.2 The bus operator has indicated that the contract extension will attract only an inflationary up-lift for the additional 12 months which is likely to be in the region of 3-4%. This is likely to increase the costs to marginally more than the budget (3% would equate to just over £13k).

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None other than the extension of the existing contract by 12 months from September 2018.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Discussions held with Badger Farm and Littleton and Harestock parish councils. Both agreed to make a financial contribution to the costs of running the service.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.2 As referred to at 1.1 above supporting public transport is in line with the aims of the Council Strategy and operating a nightbus service will align with this. Providing this service is likely to discourage the use of private modes of transport for journeys between the city centre and the outlying neighbourhoods of Winchester served by the nightbus.

7 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 N/A

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property None</i>		
<i>Community Support Parish councils are supportive of the service so withdrawing its funding could undermine confidence in the Town Forum's commitment to sustainable transport.</i>	Continue to fund the service for a further period of 12 months.	Continue to seek financial support from parish councils.
<i>Timescales None</i>		
<i>Project capacity None</i>		
<i>Financial / VfM None – see section 2 above.</i>		
<i>Legal None</i>		
<i>Innovation None</i>		
<i>Reputation</i> <i>See Community support section above. Furthermore withdrawing the service which has run since 2012 could attract criticism from regular users.</i>	Continue to fund the service for a further period of 12 months.	Continued funding for the nightbus would show the Council's commitment to delivering services which benefit the town's residents and businesses.
<i>Other</i> <i>Ending the nightbus service could adversely impact on the city's nighttime economy.</i>	Continue to fund the service for a further period of 12 months.	

9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

9.1 The Town Forum first 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 has subsequently made provision for this in its budgets since 2012/13.

- 9.2 The service is therefore well established. Appendix A shows details of passenger numbers for the period between September 2012 and January 2016 and 2017. It should be noted that these figures do include some buses not funded by the Town Forum in order to provide consistent data so patronage over the period can be more readily assessed, since the service was first introduced. Members may recall that Stagecoach made changes to their own evening bus services in 2015 and these were factored in when the new contract for the nightbus began in September 2016.
- 9.3 The table shows that between 2012 and 2016 the average number of passengers carried per year was 5861. In 2017 this increased significantly to 6635. The average number of passengers carried for each of the services (3 and 5a) and the combined figure for both went up as did as did the maximum and minimum passenger figures. Passenger numbers for most journeys made by the 3 and 5a either remained the same as pre-2017 levels or increased slightly. Consequently, whilst passenger numbers are still modest, the use of the nightbus service did rise appreciably in 2017 compared to earlier years.
- 9.4 The funding of the service has been included in the Town Account as a reoccurring item and it is anticipated that the provision made for 18/19 (£12.7k) will almost cover the full cost of the Town's Forum contribution bearing in mind the service will be subject to an inflationary up-lift. The figure won't be available until later in the year as the contract extension would not start until September. There is also the possibility of external contributions towards the cost of the service from Badger Farm and Littleton and Harestock parish councils. Both provided £500 to support the nightbus in 2017/18.
- 9.5 In light of the latest passenger information attached at Appendix A the Town Forum needs to decide whether continued investment in the nightbus service for an additional 12 months from September 2018 is appropriate and provides value for money.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 No other options have been considered at this point and continued financial support for the nightbus service would be based upon a 12 month extension of the existing timetable.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

WTF241 – Winchester Evening Bus Service Up-date - 27 June 2016

WTF238 – Winchester Evening Bus Services Up-date 9 March 2016.

WTF216– Winchester Evening Bus Services Update – 11 March 2015

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

WTF201 – Winchester Town Evening Bus Service – 12 March 2014

WTF194 – Winchester Evening Bus Service – 11 September 2013

WTF179 – Winchester Night Bus – 12 September 2012

Other Background Documents:-

None.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Passenger Data.

Appendix A - Winchester Night Bus Patronage - Sept 2012 to December 2017

Summary Statistics	2012 to 2016	2017
Maximum passengers carried in one day (all services)	79	112
Maximum passengers carried - any one service	33	44
Minimum passengers carried in one day (all services)	7	11
Average daily passengers carried (all services)	39	43
Annual passenger numbers carried	5861	6635
Average passengers carried per bus	6	7
Average passengers carried on No. 3 service	5	6
Average passengers carried on No. 5A service	7	8

Summary by Service	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
Sept 2012 to Dec 2016	2210	2315	0015	2135	2240	2340
Ave. Thursday passenger No.	5	5	2	7	6	4
Ave. Friday passenger No.	7	7	4	9	8	10
Ave. Saturday passenger No.	7	4	4	8	8	7
Ave. No. of passengers per week	19	16	10	24	22	22
Ave. No. of passengers per bus	6	5	3	8	7	7

Summary by Service	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
2017	2210	2315	0015	2135	2240	2340
Ave. Thursday passenger No.	8	5	3	8	5	5
Ave. Friday passenger No.	10	7	4	9	9	11
Ave. Saturday passenger No.	9	6	3	9	9	10
Ave. No. of passengers per week	27	18	9	25	23	25
Ave. No. of passengers per bus	9	6	3	8	8	8