

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER NIGHT BUS SERVICE

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WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

Since 2012 the Town Forum has supported the operation of a Winchester Night bus service.

In March 2019 (WTF 268 refers) the Town Forum resolved to continue the funding of the Winchester night bus and request Hampshire County Council to proceed to tender for a new contract to provide a night bus service for a period of 2 Years (with a 1-year extension option) such service to run from September 2019.

In June 2019 (WTF 271 refers) the Town Forum confirmed that they wished to continue the night bus service from September 2019 for a further period of 2 years at a price of £7152 per annum

The current contract will therefore expire in September 2021 and the Town Forum needs to decide whether to continue to support the night bus financially by the funding of the 1-year extension option on the existing contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Town Forum decides whether to continue to support the funding of the Winchester night bus service by asking Hampshire County Council to enact the one-year extension to the current contract from September 2021 in accordance with Exception to Contract Procedure Rules 41.1(e).

IMPLICATIONS:

1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District - 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.
- 1.2 Homes for all - No impact considered
- 1.3 Vibrant Local Economy - The support for an evening bus service also enables residents' later access to Pubs and Restaurants in the town, hence supporting the local economy.
- 1.4 Living Well – Access to the night-time economy allows enhanced social mobility for those without private motorised transport

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Town Forum has made provision in the Town Account for the continued funding of the night bus as a recurring item with a budget of £13.5k for 2019/20. However, a number of the supported bus services were subsequently registered as commercial service and the required level of support for 2019/20 and 2020/21 was £7152 and £7827 respectively per Annum.
- 2.2 Furthermore, due to the pandemic, restrictions on services and facilities the decision was taken (by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with Stagecoach) to further reduce some of the service which will result in a minor rebate of 33% of the annual fee for the affected period.
- 2.3 In the past the parish of Littleton and Harestock have agreed to make a contribution of £500 to support the service. They have been approached again and are willing to do the same for a new contract. A rebate for the past year on the same basis as above is being arranged.
- 2.4 Should the town forum wish to support the night bus for the year 2021/22 then the fee will be for the previous amount agreed plus an inflationary allowance based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Local Government Act 1999 requires the Council to make arrangements to achieve best value in the exercise of its functions.

- 3.2 The original contract on which the extension is being sought has been tendered by Hampshire County Council using their established passenger transport contracting framework of pre-approved contractors.
- 3.3 Officers request approval to initiate the option for a one year extension to contract to continue services. The extension to the contract will be carried out in accordance with the Council's standard contract procedure rules
- 3.4 Any such contract is to be held by Hampshire County Council and funded by the Town Forum.
- 3.5 HCC are happy with the arrangements and are prepared to continue with the procurement process on the same basis as before; in that they hold the contract for the service extension and the service itself is funded by the Town Forum.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Littleton and Harestock parish council have been consulted and they have agreed to make a financial contribution to the costs of running the night bus service as they have done in the past.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 None

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 None

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1

Risk	Mitigation	Opportunities
<i>Property - None</i>		
<i>Community Support councils have been 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 an additional year	Continue to seek financial support from parish councils.
<i>Timescales- None</i>		
<i>Project capacity- None</i>		
<i>Financial / VfM- None</i>		
<i>Legal- None</i>		
<i>Innovation- None</i>		
<i>Reputation See Community support Section above. Furthermore withdrawing the service which has run since 2012 could attract criticism from regular users. It may also be viewed as reducing support for the city centre's night-time economy.</i>	Continue to fund the service for a further period of two years or other such period as may be agreed.	Continue to fund the night bus would show the Council's commitment to delivering services which benefit the town's residents and businesses.
<i>Other – Ending the night bus service could adversely impact on the city's night-time economy.</i>	Continue to fund the service for an additional year	

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

11.1 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.

- 11.2 Subsequent changes and increases to commercial operations by Stagecoach have reduced the need for subsidised services. However, it is understood that Stagecoach will be again be reviewing its operations and that whilst the situation may change in the future, the initial plan is to resume full evening operations in June 2021.
- 11.3 The previous report agreed by the Town Forum in March 2019 (WTF 268 refers) and covers all of the salient details regarding the establishment and use of the service and at that meeting when it was resolved to continue to fund the service in principle.
- 11.4 Appendix A - Winchester Night Bus Patronage - Sept 2012 to December 2018, not all of the buses shown are supported by the town forum but are provided to show a low and steady use of the Night bus operation.
- 11.5 Patronage figures for 2019 are not available from Stagecoach, nor are detailed figures available for 2020. However, the last year has seen an unprecedented situation with local bus patronage reduced to between 10 and 20% of previous levels and summary findings from Stagecoach indicate that the above reduction in use is correct. Whilst no realistic picture can be provided of the use of the night bus during 2020, it is for the Forum to decide if it wishes to support the service as operations try to return to normality

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 In view of the limited potential for alternative proposals during the current situation, other options for support of evening bus service have not been considered.
- 12.2 Forum members do of course have the option to end financial support for the night bus, this would have some impact on the regular users who would need to find alternative means of transport.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: -

Previous Committee Reports: -

WTF271 – Winchester Night Bus Service Update – 12 June 2019

WTF268 – Winchester Night Bus Service Update - 21 March 2019

WTF261 – Winchester Night Bus Service Update - 28 March 2018

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 - Winchester Night Bus Patronage - Sept 2012 to December 2018

Summary Statistics	2012 to 2016	2017	2018
Maximum passengers carried in one day (all services)	76	112	89
Maximum passengers carried - any one service	26	44	38
Minimum passengers carried in one day (all services)	7	11	7
Average daily passengers carried (all services)	38	43	41
Annual passenger numbers carried	5697	6586	N/A
Average passengers carried per bus	6	7	7
Average passengers carried on No. 3 service	5	6	6
Average passengers carried on No. 5A service	7	8	7

Summary by Service Sept 2012 to Jan 2016	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
	2210	2315	15	2135	2240	2340
Ave. Thursday passenger No.	5	4	2	7	5	4
Ave. Friday passenger No.	7	7	4	9	7	10
Ave. Saturday passenger No.	6	4	4	8	7	7
Ave. No. of passengers per week	18	15	9	24	19	21
Ave. No. of passengers per bus	6	5	3	8	6	7

Summary by Service 2017	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
	2210	2315	15	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

Summary by Service 2018	Service No. 3			Service No. 5A		
	2210	2315	15	2135	2240	2340
Ave. Thursday passenger No.	9	5	2	8	4	4
Ave. Friday passenger No.	11	7	4	9	7	10
Ave. Saturday passenger No.	9	7	3	8	8	10
Ave. No. of passengers per week	28	19	9	25	19	24
Ave. No. of passengers per bus	9	6	3	8	6	8

Note - Data only available for 5A to September 2018