

**DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, STREETSCENE AND BROADBAND - CLLR JOHN THOMSON**

**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE**

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**REFERENCE:** HSB-008-13 Intention

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## **PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO EVENING JOURNEYS ON BUS SERVICE X3**

### **Purpose of Report**

To seek Cabinet Member approval for the withdrawal of funding provided by the Council for evening journeys on bus service X3, in order to achieve financial savings as agreed by the Council in its financial plan for 2013/14.

### **Consultation**

Consultation has been carried out to seek the views of users and other interested parties on the changes to the timetable that it was expected would result from the reduction in Council funding:

- 86 responses were received to a bus user questionnaire (**Appendix 1**) that was handed out on the bus and which was available on the Council's website.
- 16 written responses were received to a letter (**Appendix 2**) that was distributed by the Area Board managers to affected town and parish councils in their area, local members, and other local contacts. Copies were also sent to a number of groups representing older people and those with disabilities, and Hampshire County Council also circulated it within its area.
- Discussions have been held with the transport officers of Hampshire, Dorset and Bournemouth Councils whose residents would also be affected by the proposed changes.

The main points raised by the written responses are summarised in **Appendix 3**, and the responses to the user questionnaire in **Appendices 4A and 4B**.

### **Options Considered**

The results of the consultation demonstrate a higher number of passengers than expected using the service, for a range of journey purposes including travel to/from work and education as well as leisure. Consideration has therefore been given to finding ways in which a service can continue to be provided that meets the needs of as many of the current users as possible

while reducing the cost to Wiltshire Council to an acceptable level. Options that have been considered (these are not mutually exclusive) include:

- (i) Funding a reduced level of service that can be secured at a lower cost but that still provides the journeys that have been identified by the consultation as being the best used and most important to those who responded to the consultation (in particular the 2000 Bournemouth – Salisbury and the 2140 departure from Salisbury).
- (ii) Asking the bus company to review the commercial viability of the evening service and its ability to operate all or part of it at a reduced cost to the local authorities.
- (iii) Asking the other local authorities (in particular Hampshire) to reconsider the funding they provide in view of the benefits that the evening service brings to their residents and communities.

**Reason for Decision**

Wilts & Dorset’s decision to operate a service on a commercial basis meets the majority of the needs identified by the responses to the consultation, and allows the Council to achieve a financial saving. However, the situation may need to be reviewed again if there are future changes to the service that is provided commercially.

**INTENTION TO MAKE DECISION**

Following consultation with officers I give notice that I intend to make the decision set out in the attached report. If you would like to make any representations to me on this issue please do so by 28/08/13

**The following supporting documents are attached:**

- HSB-008-13 - Report
- HSB-008-13 - Appendix 1 Bus user Questionnaire
- HSB-008-13 - Appendix 2 Copy of Letter sent to Consultees
- HSB-008-13 - Appendix 3 Summary of points raised by written responses
- HSB-008-13 - Appendices 4A and 4B - Summary of User Questionnaire Analysis
- HSB-008-13 - Appendix 5 - Guidelines for Funding of Supported Services

**The following supporting documents are available from the officer named above:**

Full responses to the consultation

Date: .....19/08/13.....

Cllr John Thomson  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for  
Highways, Streetscene and Broadband