

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

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SERVICE

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REFERENCE: HSB-015-13 APPROVED

PROPOSAL FOR THE CHANGES TO THE CORSHAM TOWN BUS SERVICE

Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet Member approval for proposed changes to the Corsham Town bus service, in order to achieve financial savings as agreed by the Council in its financial plan for 2013/14 and as a result of the ending of developer funding that had been used to expand the service.

Consultation

Consultation has been carried out to seek the views of users and other interested parties on proposed changes to the Corsham Town service:

- Prior to the consultation commencing, discussions were held with representatives of Corsham Town Council, Corsham Community Area Network, and MoD Basil Hill. The funding situation was explained and options discussed, with the preferred option being the one that was put out to consultation.
- 168 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.
- 9 written responses were received to a letter (**Appendix 2**) that was distributed by the Area Board manager to the town and parish councils, local members, and other local contacts. Copies were also sent to a number of groups representing bus users, older people, and those with disabilities, and to local community and voluntary transport schemes. The consultation letter and information sheet was also available on the Council's website.

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 consultation was designed to identify any significant impacts on the travel and access needs of current users of the service that would result from the proposed changes. Whilst it is

not possible in a situation where resources are limited to cater for the needs of everyone, every effort has been made to look for affordable ways of revising the proposals to address the main issues raised:

- (i) A number of changes have been made to the proposals, as identified in the main report, to meet some of the main needs that respondents said would not be met under the original proposals.
- (ii) Prior to the consultation, a variety of ways of achieving the required saving were considered. This included in particular the option of retaining the two current routes (10A and 10E), but running at a reduced frequency of hourly on each route. The options were discussed with representatives of Corsham Town Council, Corsham Community Area Network, and MoD Basil Hill and it was agreed to consult on the basis of the 'single loop' proposal as this would continue to provide a frequent and attractive service for the majority of users that would encourage greater overall use of the service.
- (iii) Following the consultation, the option of retaining the two current routes on a reduced frequency, which was suggested as an alternative by several consultees, was again given serious consideration. It was, however, rejected as it is considered that the main issues identified by the consultation can be addressed by the changes proposed in (i) above, and to reduce the frequency of the service to hourly would have an adverse impact on use of the service as a whole.
- (iv) Several other suggestions were made by respondees to the consultation, and responses to these are given in **Appendix 3**.

Reason for Decision

It is considered that the revised proposals offer the most acceptable balance between meeting the needs of users and ongoing affordability for the Council.

DECISION MADE

I approve that the original proposals that formed the basis for the consultation be amended to incorporate the changes referred to in paragraph 11 and **Appendix 6** of this report, and are adopted as the basis for the changes to the service that will be introduced in January 2014.

This decision was published on 20/11/13 and will come into force on 28/11/13.

The following supporting documents are attached:

- Appendix 1 - Copy of bus user questionnaire
- Appendix 2 - Copy of letter and information sheet sent to consultees
- Appendix 3 - Summary of main points raised by written responses
- Appendices 4A and 4B - Summary of user questionnaire analysis
- Appendix 5 - Guidelines for Funding of Supported Services
- Appendix 6 - Revised timetable proposal

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

Full responses to the consultation

Date: 15 November 2013

Cllr John Thomson

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