

Email from LCC re: Local Bus Services sent 3rd February, 2016

Dear Mr Harbour

Withdrawal of Subsidies for Local Bus Services

Thank you for your email regarding enquiries around the decision made to withdraw subsidies for local bus services.

The County Council continues to face an unprecedented financial challenge. Over the next five years to 2020/21 the County Council needs to make savings of £262m on top of those agreed within previous budget processes. This extremely difficult financial picture is the result of continued cuts in funding by Government, rising costs and rising demand for key services.

Based on current spending and forecast demand for services, the County Council will not have sufficient financial resources to meet its statutory obligations by April 2018, even if we no longer continue to deliver any of the non-statutory services. The County Council will need to rely heavily on reserves in order to set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18.

With regards to the proposals for withdrawing all subsidies for bus services, unfortunately, many of the proposals will affect a wide range of service areas and impact on frontline services. Where possible, we are continuing to look for more efficient ways of working that save money without affecting our customers and communities.

We have formally advised the bus operators of this decision and that the subsidies for Lancashire County Council bus service contracts will cease on 2 April 2016. This will include the termination of the contract to provide some local bus services.

Whilst many of these bus service contracts are not commercially viable, bus operators are considering whether they could provide some service level in the area, without any level of subsidy. Where this is not possible bus operators will deregister the service with the Traffic Commissioner from 2 April 2016. We have asked operators if they could confirm their intentions as soon as possible on this matter.

When information about potential service coverage is known, we will forward details of those services, whole or sections, which we are anticipating not to be provided, to other operators to establish if there are alternative commercial opportunities to maintain some level of service in an area.

Following these discussions with bus operators, we would then be in a position to advise residents/local communities where conventional bus services would no longer operate and what, if any, mitigating action can be taken.

I trust this information clarifies the current position.

Yours sincerely

Oliver Starkey
Head of Public and Integrated Transport

From: HarbourNick [<mailto:nick.harbour@pendle.gov.uk>]
Sent: 11 January 2016 13:31
To: Have Your Say <HaveYourSay@lancashire.gov.uk>
Subject: Cuts

Good afternoon,

I've had a number of phone calls over the last couple of working days in relation to services being cut (in particular, the bus services throughout small villages).

Many people, particularly elderly people, are concerned that if the buses are stopped, they will be isolated in their village and have no other means of access into the bigger towns to do things like bits of shopping.

Whilst I appreciate nothing is certain at the minute – is there anything I can be telling them to ease their fears slightly? I.e. Will it be the buses are perhaps reduced from one every hour as at present to perhaps one every two hours? Or are you actually looking at stopping the service all together? If so, what would happen then with regards to the buses and people being isolated in their villages?

Thanks,

Nick Harbour
Business Support Officer