

Executive Support

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Heather Clarke

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Please ask for: Amanda Felton

JT/AJF

20 November 2017

Dear Ms Clarke

RECEIPT OF PETITION – REQUEST TO RETAIN CONNECT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE FOR SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE

I refer to the petition, signed by local residents requesting the retention of the Connect Community Transport Service for South Staffordshire. I can advise you that receipt of the petition will be reported to Cllr Mark Deaville, Cabinet Member for Commercial (incl. Highways & Transport)

As you are aware an eight week public consultation on how best to spend Staffordshire County Council's £1.3m annual bus subsidy has resulted in the option which safeguards most journeys. The County Council's Cabinet on 15 November 2017 has also agreed to work with bus operators, district and borough councils, parish councils and local community groups to explore options to support some of the journeys which will no longer be funded by the authority from April 2018. While the vast majority of bus journeys in Staffordshire are currently made without any subsidy from the County Council, some journeys are still costing taxpayers more than £10 every time someone gets on board. As the County Council needs to spend a record £300m on care this year alone, we need to make sure that every penny of taxpayers' money is working its hardest. The option chosen, means that most trips can still be made at the lowest average cost to taxpayers.

More than 96 per cent of all bus journeys currently made in Staffordshire will still be able to be made. In cases where journeys will no longer be subsidised, such as is planned for South Staffs Connect in its present form, officers and politicians want to work with local bus operators, local councils and communities to explore other options for viable funding and service provision. This work will progress with urgency.

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Further details of the approved proposal can be found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/busreview. This details only journeys which will continue to be subsidised by the county council.

Any changes to services will be implemented by bus operators from April 2018. The County Council is currently not able to confirm final changes on specific routes which will no longer be subsidised as detailed discussions with all partners continue to take place. Details of any changes will be finalised and published once known.

Should you require further information regarding your petition please contact Jeff Tucker on 01785 276735.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Felton
Executive Support Officer