

Agenda Item No. 4(c)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**CABINET MEMBER MEETING – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

21 June 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**PETITION TO DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL OPPOSING THE
WITHDRAWAL OF COMMERCIAL BUS SERVICE 394 BY HIGH PEAK
BUSES**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To consider the County Council's response to a petition received opposing High Peak Buses' decision to withdraw commercial bus Service 394 that operates between Glossop and Stepping Hill.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

A petition was received by the Cabinet Member at the meeting on 22 March 2016, opposing High Peak Buses' decision to withdraw commercial bus Service 394 (Minute No. 30/16 refers).

Service 394 operates between Glossop and Stepping Hill, serving Gamesley, Charlesworth and Chisworth in Derbyshire, and Lane Ends, Marple Bridge and Marple in Greater Manchester. Between Charlesworth and Marple it is the only bus service and the only means for residents along the route to travel to and from Stepping Hill for healthcare, work and for school and college students.

Until 25 March 2016, High Peak Buses operated bus Service 394 between Glossop and Stepping Hill, hourly from Monday to Friday, on a commercial basis. As a commercial service operated with no involvement from the County Council, the decision to withdraw Service 394 was taken solely by High Peak Buses.

The Saturday service, also hourly, has been provided, until recently, under contract to the County Council and jointly funded by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

It was resolved that the Cabinet Member should be asked to investigate the matters raised in the petition.

Under the terms of the 1985 Transport Act, the County Council has to identify socially necessary bus services which are not provided by the commercial bus operators. The Act does not set out the level of support required for bus services that are deemed socially necessary. In Derbyshire 85% of the local bus network is operated commercially, that is to say, funded without subsidy from the local authority.

Current Situation

Since 29 March 2016, Service 394 has been provided wholly under contract to the Council and jointly funded by TfGM. The two authorities have stepped in to continue the service following the withdrawal of the commercial Monday to Friday service. Due to the limited funds available to both authorities, the replacement service could only be provided at a reduced two hourly frequency and by re-utilising funds previously used for providing the Saturday service. The Saturday Service 394 has now ceased.

Conclusions

The Council and TfGM have secured the future of Service 394 from Monday to Friday until at least October 2017.

Local Member Comment

Councillors Ellie Wilcox and Damien Greenhalgh have been notified. No comments have been received.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The Council must ensure the finite funds are best targeted to provide service provision while being mindful of best value. To retain a more frequent service could not be sustained due to the limited funds available to the County Council and TfGM.

(4) **Environmental and Health Considerations** Continuing Service 394, albeit at a reduced frequency, maintains access to health, education and other essential services for Derbyshire residents in the Glossop area.

(5) **Transport Considerations** As set out in the report. It is considered that the actions outlined above should not have any detrimental impact on equalities, race discrimination or crime and disorder.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, property and social value considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Janet Pickersgill, extension 36734.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

9.1 The Cabinet Member agrees that with support and joint funding from Transport for Greater Manchester, Service 394 should be continued under contract at a reduced frequency on Mondays to Fridays only until at least October 2017.

9.2 The local Member and lead petitioner be advised of the views as set out in this report.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities