

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 6th JUNE 2019

'SAVE THE 159 BUS AND STOP CUTS TO THE 153 BUS'
RESPONSE BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND
TRANSPORT

Following an extensive public consultation exercise, the County Council adopted a new Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS) in October 2018 to ensure its passenger transport provision is fit for purpose and cost-effective. These enable the Council to review all of the bus services it financially supports and to assess the case for continued support against the Strategy scoring system.

Whilst the council appreciates concerns being raised by communities about risks to their local bus services, unfortunately, the significant financial challenges facing the council means that providing regular bus services in areas of limited passenger demand is not sustainable.

All subsidised local bus services are being reviewed during this calendar year as part of the implementation of the new PTPS. Following Roberts Coaches registration to withdraw the 159 service from 22nd December 2018, the County Council agreed to provide a subsidy to enable them to continue running the service until the end of June 2019. This was to allow time for a more detailed review of the service against the PTPS assessment criteria with the results of that assessment being used to decide on the most fit for purpose passenger transport solution going forward.

No decisions have as yet been made about any future course of action for the 159 service and the community engagement process for the service is due to take place between July and November 2019. In view of this it is intended to extend the contract further until a decision is made regarding the future of the service. To facilitate the engagement process communities will be provided with an engagement pack. The pack will contain information about the existing service, data used for the review, its outcome and any intended course of action. The pack will also provide guidance for the community on developing local community solutions. This petition will be considered as part of the review and engagement process.

The Arriva 153 is a fully commercial service and any decisions on how and when it operates are at the discretion of Arriva as a private operator. The County Council has no regulatory powers which require Arriva to reinstate the service to its previous level or to introduce additional journeys. Any representations regarding this service should be made directly to Arriva for their consideration.

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