

## **Report to:** Environment Committee

**Report Ref:** ENV1916  
**Meeting Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
**Agenda Item:** 7  
**Prepared By:** Town Clerk

**Subject:** Bus Services



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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Cllr Tony Dean contacted the Town Clerk to advise that Cheshire East Council is likely to receive a six-figure sum from central government to increase subsidies for bus services and that the Deputy Leader (Cllr Craig Browne, Alderley Edge) was planned to meet with Town and Parish councils prior to determining how this funding will be allocated. The Town Clerk has contacted Cllr Browne to request a meeting for the Town Council.

The Knutsford Guardian has reported that Cllr Browne has suggested that Town and Parish Councils contribute towards the funding of bus services (“Cheshire East Council hopes to work with parishes on new buses online”, 15<sup>th</sup> January, Online).

Two actions have been outstanding on the committee action log due to officer resource constraints and these will be picked up in the coming months. The first was to review the location of bus stops to ascertain suitability (seating, shelters etc) and the second was to investigate options for the Town Council funding a Knutsford Bus Service to replace the 300 town circular.

#### **1.2 EXISTING BUS SERVICES**

There are currently three bus routes serving Knutsford:

Warrington’s Own Buses route 47 - A once per day Monday to Friday service to Warrington (arriving 10:25, departing 14:10) connecting Knutsford to Lymm, Latchford Shopping Centre and Warrington.

D&G buses route 88 - Hourly Monday to Saturday services connecting Knutsford to Altrincham. Two hourly services connecting Knutsford to Macclesfield, Macclesfield Hospital, Radbroke Hall and Wilmslow. First bus to Altrincham arrives 8:20 and last leaves at 18:50. The first bus to Macclesfield arrives 8:15 and last departs 18:05. Different timetable Saturdays.

D&G Buses route 89 - Five services daily Monday to Saturday, every two hours connecting Knutsford to Northwich, Lostock Gralam and Pickmere. First bus arrives in Northwich at 09:25, last departs at 16:40.

## **2.0 2018 BUS SURVEY**

Following the last changes to bus services, the Town Council published a survey on its website to ascertain the impact of the changes. This survey ran from October 2018 and 71 responses were received. The responses are in Annex A.

The survey particularly highlighted the social impact of the reduction in bus services with a number of respondents reporting that the changes were leading to increased isolation, reducing their ability to shop locally, affecting independence and causing issues with travel to employment and medical services.

## **3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The committee should note the upcoming meeting with Cheshire East Council to discuss bus services and may wish to discuss priorities for service improvements.

## ANNEX A: 2018/19 SURVEY RESULTS

How often did you use the bus services in Knutsford prior to the changes in April 2018 (withdrawal of service 300 and timetable/routes changes)?

Answer	Responses	%
Never	3	4.30
Rarely	10	14.08
Monthly	6	7.04
Weekly	17	23.94
Several times a week	23	32.39
Daily	13	18.31
	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

Why do you use the bus service?

Answer	Responses	%
Travel to work	20	28.17
Travel to education	5	7.04
Shopping	44	61.97
Accessing leisure	28	39.44
Accessing healthcare	32	45.07
Visiting family/friends	24	33.80

Are you able to travel in any of the following ways?

Answer	Responses	%
Car/motorbike	35	49.30
Cycling	6	8.45
Walking	48	67.61

Where do you need/want to travel by bus?

Answer	Responses	%
Town Centre	47	66.20
Northwich	24	33.80
Macclesfield	37	52.11
Warrington	<b>17</b>	<b>23.94</b>
Altrincham	<b>36</b>	<b>50.70</b>
Wilmslow	<b>36</b>	<b>50.70</b>
Airport	<b>19</b>	<b>26.76</b>
Knutsford (outside Town Centre)	<b>29</b>	<b>40.85</b>
Holmes Chapel	<b>3</b>	<b>4.23</b>
Other	<b>11</b>	<b>15.49</b>

Other responses: Crewe, Cottons, Rail Stations, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow Station, Macclesfield Hospital, Mobberley, Mobberley Road Dentist, Bucklow Manor, Wythenshawe Hospital

### **Tell us more about how the changes to bus schedules/routes has affected you**

- It's changed my whole life now I only walk to take children to school and back so becoming a bit of a recluse
- I need to be able to get to Altrincham and Wilmslow stations reliably to catch trains when visiting family or going on holidays
- I can't get to my local doctors surgery I have to go to Mobberley . I have to have my shopping delivered from Tesco in Northwich. I really want to shop local but I have had that privilege taken away from me now. I can't get into the square at Knutsford anymore. I would like to go out for lunch , but I can't. I haven't been out in the evening since the service stopped. You have made me housebound.
- We don't go out as much, I have had to make arrangements to start work later as it was impossible to get the children into school and myself to work on time without a bus.
- Missing the convenience of the 300 to get about the town and also the Macclesfield bus is not as frequent for hospital appointments.
- It limits where I work, before I had my little boy I worked in Wilmslow and worked Monday to Saturday and used the bus to get there as they aren't as regular and often run late/don't turn up so would make it hard to maintain a job there. I have also had to go Our "local" job centre in Macclesfield, trying to do this in school hours with the bus service being every 2hours made this impossible.
- I have two little children & they can't walk to Knutsford do a shop & home again
- Isolated me
- Dr's appointments more difficult because of times & distances. Getting to & from work effect working hours Social activities effected due to no later buses
- A bus to Macclesfield to the local hospital is only every 2 hours which is a real pain, but 50 pounds on a taxi both ways is ridiculous also. I like the fact that the buses now go straight to Altrincham Macclesfield and Northwich, it saves waiting for different buses once at Knutsford bus station.
- have to pay for taxi but can now only go out once every 4 weeks
- Not having a regular bus to and from hospital is very stressful, having appointment late afternoon and not being able to get home is very difficult
- no buses down mobberley road ,have to walk half way to knutsford to catch a bus !!!
- Longer walk especially in the bad weather nit good for elderly people
- My son his severely autistic, you stopped the bus stop on Shaw drive/mobberley road and made them go round Longridge instead - he doesn't like change, I can't get him to wait on Longridge, on a grass verge with no shelter.
- Living on Parkgate, it was easy to use our gate onto Mobberley Road to get to the bus stops on either side, either to travel to Altrincham and Wilmslow or, more often, into Knutsford and back. The bus now bypasses the Mobberley Road stops, and walking to the Falcon or to a place on Lowe Drive is not a helpful option. Also, the frequency of the buses now is very poor. We have stopped using the bus completely.

- Less frequency to Wilmslow means it is unattractive to connect to trains so take the car and park.
- Do not tie in with Hospital appointments. Dentist appointments in Wilmslow are awkward I always have to go early or just miss the bus coming back which means waiting an hour.
- Pointless adjustment of 88 bus from 0725 to 0730 means i miss my connecting bus.
- More walking - more staying at home - more expense in taxis
- The frequency has affected my planning. i.e Work/Healthcare/leisure
- I have to plan hospital visits well in advance so I am able to get to my appointments and back home again. There have been times when I have been coming home from hospital appointment and the bus has been missing (regular occurrence) and I have been really worried that I would not be able to get home as it's the last bus or sometimes the last two buses that are missing or running very late. When you have no other means of getting home it can be frightening. The last time this happened to me I thought I might end up having to spend the night in altrincham bus station. I also struggle to see family as much as I was able to.
- Can't access work, local services, town centre
- can't get to town centre and now local shop is closing the one shop shop and post office
- i have to leave home at 6.45 am to catch the first bus at 7 am then have a 20 minute walk at the drop off ,so the next bus is far too late to get to work on time. My husband works occasionally in london but has to get a bus an hour earlier as the london train leaves at 11 minutes past the hour and the bus doesnt always run on time to get to the station with breathing space for train
- have to use my car as ny wife has been ill once she is better i would like to use local buses in spite of changes e.g. leaving bus/getting on grass verges in icy v wet weather
- Without the 300 bus I now, with difficulty, have to walk up Acacia Ave. to Northwich Rd & get the bus from Northwich. You are open to all the elements & spray from lorries and cars. If it's raining. Also we have at least 2 hrs to wait for a return bus.
- Feeling trapped, even depressed.
- being late for school.
- Limited my ability to shop independently
- I worry about getting to certain places, I do not socialise as much as I used to. The was my main link to shopping, socialising and help me to get out of the house ( I am 78 years old)
- Less outings and more expense as a pensioner
- The long gaps in the 88 service between Knutsford and Wilmslow in the morning peak and between Knutsford and Macclesfield in both the morning and evening peaks has meant there are some jobs I can no longer apply for due to no bus at a suitable time.
- Reduction of frequency of Macclesfield service has made it more difficult to attend medical appointments at Macclesfield hospital. However, I find the 89 Knutsford to Northwich better than the old 289 due to it running to a more consistent timetable. I have been forced to use the 89 recently due to Northern strikes.
- No longer practical to use the bus to do shopping due to the low frequency through Over Ward. Also buses are now often crowded meaning it's difficult to take my shopping trolley on the bus.
- I now walk to places rather than using the bus.

- It restricts the times I can get places and can make it awkward for getting to work on time
- Shopping at booths used to be easy - but now 40 min walk each way. Less fresh fruit and veg now. Dependant on children to run me around do shopping
- I use the car more to go into Knutsford. I often used to walk into Knutsford and catch bus back with shopping
- Infrequency and changing times make relying on the buses impossible
- Much less opportunity to get the bus into Knutsford and do shopping. Impossible to get to Wilmslow/ Macclesfield for London trains (work)
- I like just off Mobberley road and the bus no longer passes by here so I need to walk 10+ minutes to the nearest bus stop. With the less frequent service I'm rarely able to go out socially with my colleagues as I need good links between Knutsford and Wilmslow.
- I have had to change jobs and do online shopping instead of shopping in Knutsford.
- Completely robbed me of my quality of life. I have lost my independence. I am completely housebound and I don't see anyway.
- I haven't been able to go out, only to hospital appointments. I feel hemmed in, and depressed after paying a high council tax - I wish the councillors were dependant upon buses!
- No longer shop in the town centre

#### How often do you now/would you use the bus services?

Answer	Responses	%
5-7 days per week	18	25.35
1-4 days per week	20	28.17
At least once per month	11	15.49
A few times a year	13	18.31
Once a year or less	9	12.68
	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Overall, how satisfied are you with the current bus services in Knutsford?

Answer	Responses	%
Very satisfied	-	-
Satisfied	7	9.86
Dissatisfied	25	35.21
Very Dissatisfied	39	54.93
	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>