

COUNCIL 12 MAY 2022

MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question from Councillor Julia Evans

Whilst welcoming the temporary and limited support from Shropshire Council to retain some of the bus services threatened with cuts by Arriva, the situation remains poor and early indications are that the subsidised service 20 is failing to provide even the reduced level of service required, with many buses not arriving. What action will cabinet members take to ensure the subsidised service is delivered as required by the subsidy agreement? Will the portfolio holder commit to carrying out a feasibility study in to introducing a bus franchising system as is being implemented or considered in many other local authority areas?

Response from Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture, Leisure, Tourism and Transport

As you will know the council has stepped in to temporarily support a number of services previously operated on a commercial basis by Arriva and whilst this support has initially been provided through until September, to allow us time to consider alternative options, I should point out that the financial support for service 20 in particular has been substantial. Officers have spoken to Arriva regarding the performance of this interim service and they have confirmed via the vehicle tracking units that it is continuing to service all of the stops at the times specified in the revised timetable and we will continue to monitor its performance.

With regard to the option of a franchising model for Shropshire and undertaking a study to identify if that would be of benefit, we are open to exploring its potential and the associated benefits that may bring for Shropshire, which was an element of our BSIP submission to the Dft.

With the aforementioned withdrawal of bus services resulting in additional council financial support, we are considering all of the options available to us to ensure that we have a sustainable network that reflects modern day travel needs. As part of that commitment we will shortly be inviting all members to a public transport briefing session and then following that the formation of a cross party working group, to discuss and plan with officers a strategy for public transport going forwards, which may of course include a recommendation to consider franchising.