

Record of Decision

Elected Mayor's Response to Notice of Motion - 60 and 65 Bus Services

Decision Taker

Elected Mayor on 5 December 2018

Decision

- (i) that the motion be rejected for the reasons given below;
- (ii) that it be noted that Torbay Council is continuing to work with the Torbay Community Development Trust (TCDT) and other operators to look at all viable options for providing a service to replace the 60 and 65 buses including looking at models such as the door to door bus service model operated through ageing well by the Wellswood and Torwood Community Partnership (<https://ageingwelltorbay.com/2018/04/24/door-to-door-bus-service-launch/>);
- (iii) that it be noted that the approval of the Transport Commissioner is required for any operator to commence or withdraw a bus route; and
- (iv) that, in considering viable options in (ii) above the Elected Mayor, in consultation with Chief Finance Officer, will consider appropriate funding sources including the potential use of the Better Bus Grant.

Reason for the Decision

The original operator (Local Link) for the 60 and 65 bus services withdrew from these services as they were not commercially viable. Following consideration of a business case the Council agreed to provide capital funding to the Torbay Community Development Trust (TCDT) to provide these and the 67 bus service in February 2018. The TCDT have since notified that they are operating at a £60,000 loss due to difficulties with the maintaining the buses and lower than anticipated income from the service. This has demonstrated that the current model is not viable and therefore an alternative model needs to be found to enable the residents affected by the proposed cessation of the services access to transport.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 18 December 2018 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

At the Council meeting held on 5 December 2018, Council received the following motion, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order A14 by Councillors Long and Darling (S) as set out below:

“This Council notes with grave concern the announcement by the Torbay Community Development Trust concerning the suspension of the 60 and 65 bus services. Torbay Council recognises the vital service that these bus services provide to frail and elderly residents providing a vital link to the hospital, and also to Torquay Town Centre.

Following the announcement of the suspension, residents have highlighted a number of issues. These include:

- Buses breaking down regularly resulting in an unreliable service which may have put people off using the service resulting in a lack of income;
- Vehicles having to be fixed regularly presumably at some cost;
- The lack of any meetings between the Torbay Community Development Trust and service users, resulting in a lack of communication about the serious financial situation that was developing. This lack of communication has negated any opportunity for users of the service to promote the service or fundraise for it;
- No communication by the Torbay Community Development Trust with Ward Councillors about the financial situation until the suspension announcement denying any opportunity to explore other funding opportunities;
- Limited promotion of the bus services following the launch.

The Council calls on the Elected Mayor to establish an urgent Task and Finish Group to discover what has gone wrong and to explore potential funding solutions to sustain these vital services in the future both short term (so that the services can cover the vital Christmas period) and longer term.”

In accordance with Standing Order A14.3(a), the motion stood referred to the Elected Mayor.

The Elected Mayor responded to the motion at the meeting and his decision is set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

10 December 2018

Signed: _____
The Elected Mayor of Torbay

Date: 10 December 2018