

Save Our 6-7 Buses campaign statement to B&NES Cabinet 13-07-11

The Save Our 6-7 Buses campaign has been fighting over a year to reinstate a decent bus service. We are very grateful to both the present Council and the past one for all that has been done to enable the motion to come before you today under Agenda Item number 22:4.1 for £85,000 from the Revenue Budget Contingency fund. It is the fruit of hard work by Councillors of all parties, officers and supporters and is truly something to celebrate.

However, as a campaign, regrettably, we cannot rest while the future of this vital service remains in jeopardy in two respects:

1. The first threat is the limited one year funding. Most subsidised routes are not adopted with the proviso that funding is for one year only, so this is unusual. *What are the prospects for "identification of recurring funding" which other subsidised routes receive?* We would like to hear an answer to that question.

2. The second threat is the misleading, inaccurate and damaging terminology of the motion which refers to a "combined 20 minute frequency" being upgraded to a "combined 15 minute frequency." People very familiar with the route are baffled by those terms. They describe what for most of our residents is a 40 minute service. The only place it has been a 20 minute service is in the city centre, where desperate passengers board whichever bus arrives in order to avoid a 40 minute wait. Often it is the wrong bus, requiring double the length of journey, filling the bus so it leaves others behind. I am getting daily reports of this.

The misleading terminology fails, once again, to appreciate the crucial importance of the connection between Snow Hill and the Health Centre, and the link between Larkhall and Fairfield Park. For residents to get to and from essential local shops, the Health Centre, Post Office and Morrisons, it is indeed a 40 minute service.

The 4th bus will ease this problem and create a user-friendly 30 minute timetable. We are grateful that you are recognising this need and strenuously urge you to change the wording of the motion to *"increase frequency of the service from a 40 minute frequency to a 30 minute frequency"* to reflect the reality of passengers' experience, so that when next year's budget is considered and they refer back to this motion, there will not be a built in flaw making further Council support even more difficult.

I hope we can be assured of an Emergency Registration of this new timetable soon.

We also look forward to the launch of the Public Transport Liaison Panel.
Thank you.

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