

Safer & Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel

20 January 2011

Halcrow review and update on bus services

Halcrow review

Last summer, First commissioned the consultants Halcrow to carry out a review of their bus service network in Bath. Halcrow produced a draft report and met First to discuss it recently. First have now asked Halcrow to carry out some further work on it. They anticipate that the review will be fully concluded by the end of March 2011, at which point feedback will be issued to stakeholders on the comments raised during the consultation process.

Changes to bus services

First have registered some minor changes to bus service timetables from 6 February to improve punctuality. From the same date, Faresaver are withdrawing the peak hour journeys on Service 12 (Haycombe Cemetery to Bath). Changes will be listed on the Council's website.

Quality Partnership Scheme – Greater Bristol Bus Network

Subject to decision of the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery, the quality partnership scheme for the first corridor of the Greater Bristol Bus Network (Bath to Midsomer Norton) will start in May 2011. This will set quality standards for bus operators who wish to use the new infrastructure on the corridor. Installation of real time information displays on this corridor will commence soon.

Concessionary fares

In December, the government issued new guidance on the calculation of reimbursement to bus operators for free travel by elderly and disabled persons in the next financial year. Across, the country, many bus operators voiced concerns that there would be a reduction in the reimbursement rates and indicated that some commercial bus services would no longer be viable. Locally, the Diamond Travelcard scheme is in discussions with bus operators about an appropriate rate to meet the requirement that operators should be “no better and no worse off” by participating in the scheme.

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