



Library of – Council Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10

Wednesday 29 November 2023

1. Councillor C Eberle to Councillor Gillbe

By Councillor C Eberle to Councillor Gillbe, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Can the Executive Member give an update on the Council's plans and progress in increasing the use of public transport, both in pursuance of the Climate Change Action Plan, and also to help those residents who do not have access to car transport; particularly in relation to bus transport to and from Crowthorne and Sandhurst railway stations?

Councillor Gillbe provided the following published response:

"Bus patronage within Bracknell Forest is continuing to grow back following the COVID pandemic. Data from Thames Valley Buses, who operate 80% of routes within borough, shows that overall patronage is up 17% since the start of 2023 and up by 26% compared to this time last year. Whilst patronage on individual services will vary, these figures show that travel by bus is broadly 3% down on pre-pandemic levels.

Commercial services are performing better than council supported routes, and fare paying passengers have returned in much greater numbers than bus pass holders. In part this is due to the positive impact of the national £2 single fare cap, but also the national change in travel habits of our older population.

Promotion of bus travel by operators is key, but the council can also play a part. Next month we are promoting bus use on our supported services through a free bus offer for journeys heading to the town centre on the first four Saturdays in December. We hope to encourage non-bus users to leave the car at home during this busy period and instead enjoy the experience of modern bus travel. Hopefully for many this will be an introduction to the range of benefits that bus travel has to offer.

We will also continue to work closely with bus operators to identify how bus travel can be made easier and more convenient. Technology has its part to play, not only on the bus but also through the use of real-time information for bus arrival and departure times and to simplify how passengers pay for their fare. I am pleased to say that local bus operators are equally keen to drive these improvements forward.

However, it is important to encourage our residents to use their local bus services. The contribution that bus travel can make to the environment is clear, but for those without any other form of transport it can also be a life-line. Alongside our work with community transport providers, and voluntary groups such as the Arc, (who run a voluntary car scheme), the Council continues to fund a network of bus services that keep the borough connected. But the cost of these services continues to grow.

Against the backdrop of local authority funding pressures, providing new bus services that cannot otherwise be provided commercially by operators is now unaffordable. Therefore partnership working with local town and parish councils will be key in order to share the challenges of keeping our communities connected. This is a conversation which I hope can take place with regard to connecting people and facilities within Crowthorne and Sandhurst, for example, and I know that officers are continuing to explore the practical opportunities available.

In closing, I would like to encourage our residents to support their local bus services in the best way possible – and that is to travel by bus whenever they can. Not just to enjoy a journey that helps the environment, but also to help maintain the viability of those services for those who rely on them.”

Councillor C Eberle asked Councillor Gillbe the following supplementary question:

The answer discusses conversations with relevant partners to improve community transport connections. Please can the Executive Member provide more detail on the actions proposed and the likely timeframes, specifically in relation to Crowthorne and Sandhurst?

In response, Councillor Gillbe explained that it was not possible for the Council to create new local services in the current financial situation. An informal meeting between Bracknell Forest Council and Wokingham Borough Council had been held, part of which discussed a bus service to serve Crowthorne train station. Costed options were being developed to be shared with the two Borough and three Parish Councils who intersected the Crowthorne area. With regards to Sandhurst, members and

residents were encouraged to submit their ideas and thoughts to the upcoming consultation on the new Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan. Councillor Gillbe offered to meet with Sandhurst Councillors to discuss their proposals for local transport in the area.

2. **Councillor Harrison to Councillor Jefferies**

Councillor Harrison to Councillor Jefferies, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection

Following the agreed motion of the Council on 12 July 2023, when the Executive was called on to consider additional CCTV cameras to detect and deter fly tipping in the Borough, how many new CCTV cameras has the Council acquired for this purpose?

Councillor Jefferies provided the following published response:

"I thank Cllr Harrison for the question.

The Council's Officers in the Public Protection Partnership, continue to successfully target Envirocrime, including flytipping. When last the issue was presented to council, there was broad agreement that the service has been effective in this area of work using their "intelligence led" approach. This success is based upon using CCTV as part of their approach, in addressing antisocial behaviour. Therefore there has been no call from the service to ask for additional CCTV cameras to meet their objectives, so none have been purchased.

The relevant section of the motion calls on the Executive to commit to a

"...review of the most effective use of the funds available due to any budget underspend in 2023/24, with specific consideration of whether additional CCTV cameras to tackle fly tipping represents value for money for residents".

I remain committed to doing this review when the financial outturn of the council is known at the end of the financial year."

Councillor Harrison asked Councillor Jefferies the following supplementary question:

In light of yet another incident of serious fly tipping, this time in Wellers Lane in Warfield, will you put residents first by reconsidering the effect of refusal to step up the PPP's CCTV capacity, or are you going to continue to give the green light to cowboy waste carriers given that it's hard to get prosecutions without evidence?

Councillor Jefferies responded that he was aware of the recent fly-tipping incident and following investigation, some information was found which would be followed up. As debated at Council in July 2023, the CCTV capacity would be reviewed with a clearer view on the budget and Councillor Jefferies explained that he remained committed to this. The importance of CCTV was recognised in fighting fly-tipping, however it was not the only solution and a robust, holistic approach was required. CCTV was in place at fly-tipping hotspots around the borough, but it is not the only tool used in identifying individuals who fly tip. Data gathered showed a reduction in fly tipping incidents year on year from 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023. The number of fly tipping incidents to date for 2022 to 2023 was 633 incidents compared to 714 incidents in 2021 to 2022, a reduction of 11.5%. The Executive was in the process of doubling the fixed penalty notice charge for fly tipping. All identified perpetrators would be dealt with through fixed penalty charge or prosecution.

Following the agreed motion of the Council on 12 July 2023, when the Executive was called on to consider additional CCTV cameras to detect and deter fly tipping in the Borough, how many new CCTV cameras has the Council acquired for this purpose?