

My ref: 241209 BG_Merrells_CYP_Petition_Response
Your ref:
Date: 9 December 2024
Contact: Cllr Bryony Goodliffe
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Children, Education and Families
Executive Director: Martin Purbrick

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Dear Ms Merrells

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People's (CYP) Committee meeting on 26th November to present the details of your petition.

It is noted that you are requesting the Duxford bus routes from academic year 2023/24 be reinstated to ensure that the 30 children from homes on or near St John's Road are not having to endure a longer journey time. You have also raised the point regarding the reliability and capacity of the public bus.

In exploring this issue brought to the CYP committee's attention I can see that there has been ongoing communication between Cllr Peter MacDonald, the Passenger Transport Team and members of the Duxford community. I also note the community were informed in August of the proposed change of bus route for the September start of term. The Passenger Transport Team are not required to consult on changes when the changes fall within the Local Authority's 's Home to School policy. I understand that this felt like a sudden change to your children and young people in the September term but the Passenger Transport Team spend much time during the Summer break tendering for all contracts ready for the start of the new year once numbers and address details are finalised and changes frequently occur to routes at this time.

I can see as a result of previous conversations between local councillors and the Passenger Transport Team that an earlier change was reversed in August, before the start of term which meant that although some of the students still had an earlier start, they would all be home at the same time as those on the 7A bus.

The Passenger Transport Service are working increasingly closer with the Combined Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Authority (CPCA) to explore better value options for home to school transport. It seems in general the residents of Duxford are happy with 7A bus. The committee I note the journey time for 30 residents on the local authority transport contracted route is longer than previously, but this is still clearly within the DfE and Cambridgeshire County Council's guidelines for Home to School transport.

I also have been informed the school have carried out an initial survey in partnership with Passenger Transport Team to see if Duxford residents would swap to allow those raising this issue could join the 7A and have a shorter journey time into the school but there was not a sufficient majority. I can also see there was a further consultation carried out by the school as a last attempt to try and resolve the concerns but again although there was a small majority this was not considered a viable solution as it only moved the problem and did not



resolve the issue as residents from the neighbouring villages potentially affected by this proposal had already raised their concerns. I believe this also relates to your reference 'possibility of a new bus'.

If the transport team introduced a new service. This would split the SW01 and mean all students leave and arrive in Duxford at the same time.

- To balance the costs; it would be within reason to remove students from the 7A Service to completely fill a bus operated by us from Duxford.
- The additional cost to the Local Authority would be c£28,500 per year.

The 7A is regularly monitored by the CPCA and passenger transport service to ensure there is smooth running. I note from the transport team there have been some issues, but these have since been resolved with the operator. This monitoring will consider the public usage and along with vehicle timings.

It is the view of the Chair of the Children and Young Peoples Committee that the Passenger Transport Team have engaged with the concerns raised by the residents and have adjusted the route to minimise the concerns (return journey changes) and sought to explore further options fairly through school via surveys. Whilst you have highlighted the issue of the reliability of the public service (lateness and capacity for the public) I would like to point out such combined ventures with the CPCA support the sustainability of ongoing public bus services. The ongoing monitoring should minimise the concerns you have highlighted in relation to this vehicle.

I thank you again for bringing this to the attention of the CYP Committee and I hope you have found this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Bryony Goodliffe
Chair, Children and Young People Committee