

Mrs Krystyna Pilkington
Clerk To The Council

Our ref: 8000043972

clerk.shevingtonpc@yahoo.co.uk

13 July 2016

Dear Mrs Pilkington

RE: 635 Bus Service

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Shevington Parish Council, in relation to the 635 bus service.

As you are aware, the Monday to Saturday daytime bus service 635 between Wigan and Shevington Vale is operated commercially, by Diamond. Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) does not fund this service and decisions on the route and timetable are solely the responsibility of the operator.

During the daytime, TfGM also funds the extension of one of the commercial journeys, each hour, in both directions to and from Shevington Vale to Wrightington Hospital via Appley Bridge. On Monday to Saturday evenings, and all day on Sundays the bus service is operated under contract to TfGM, who provide financial support for the provision of the service.

In total, the funding support for the continued operation of the 635 service across all time periods amounts to more than £100,000 per annum. As part of the route of the 635 operates into West Lancashire, Lancashire County Council (LCC) made a contribution to the cost of the supported elements of the service, based on the proportion of the mileage operated with the county. However, you will be aware that from April 2016, Lancashire County Council withdrew funding support for all bus services in the county. As a result, the entire cost of the continued operation of service 635, including those sections in Lancashire, has fallen on TfGM. TfGM has committed to maintain this funding for the duration of the existing contracts.

During the evenings and on Sundays, the supported service operates every hour, between Wigan and Wrightington Hospital. In order to manage the cost of the

service within our available budget, this service is operated by one bus, which is just able to complete the return trip within an hour. In specifying the timetable for these contracts, it was considered that to follow the daytime route, to include Back Lane, Hullet Close and Woodnook Road, would increase the round trip time to more than an hour. The implications of this are that;

- part of the route would have to be withdrawn elsewhere to allow the service to continue to be provided by one bus
- the service frequency would have to be reduced to approximately 75/80 minutes to allow the service to continue to be provided by one bus
- a second bus would have to be funded to maintain the route and hourly frequency

You will be aware that the supported service is currently provided by two different operators, depending on the day of the week. TfGM has been in discussion with each of these to include the Shevington Vale loop in the evening and Sunday route, and to develop a timetable which both operators believe can be operated reliably.

However, we have now been made aware that the operator of the daytime commercial service 635 is considering some changes to the route and timetable of the service. Therefore, until these potential commercial changes are clarified, it would be premature to propose that the evening and Sunday supported journeys are rerouted.

I have passed your request for additional timetable display cases at bus stops in the area to our Route Equipment team for their consideration.

I hope that this information proves useful to you and we will continue to notify you with any updates. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me, or a member of our Customer Engagement team at customer.relations@tfgm.com or call on 0161 244 1000.

Yours Sincerely

Natalie Bessaad
Customer Engagement Officer