

MINUTES of MEETING of the MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL PETITIONS

COMMITTEE held in the Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, on Tuesday, 24 March 2015 at 10.30 am.

Present :- Councillors, Coventry (Chair), Baxter, Muirhead, Rosie and Russell

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor de Vink.

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Procedure

The Committee noted the procedure to be followed in hearing petitions as approved by the Council on 25 September 2012 and amended by the Council on 5 November 2013.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of Meeting of 4 November 2014 were submitted and approved.

4 Petition: No. 15 and No.40 Bus Services

There was submitted report dated 27 October 2014, by the Director, Resources, incorporating:-

- (a) A petition from Mrs Emma Hutt, 8 Penicuik Road, Roslin, on behalf of residents of Roslin and Auchendinny calling upon the Council to recommend to Lothian Buses to rescind their decision to alter the number 15 and 40 bus routes;
- (b) Comments on the issues raised in the petition from the Head of Commercial Operations;
- (c) Details of the revised bus services, which in effect was to withdraw the No.15 bus route from serving Roslin and Auchendinny and replace this with a revision to the route of the No.40 bus route. The new service would operate half hourly.

The Committee then heard from Mrs Hutt in support of the petition. In particular she drew attention to:-

- 408 people had subscribed to the petition, which reflected the depth of feeling in the Roslin and Auchendinny communities;
- In order to travel into Edinburgh, where many Roslin and Auchendinny commuters worked, it would be necessary to travel via the No.40 bus service to Penicuik in order to connect with the No.15 bus service. This added to the journey times faced by commuters and involved additional

cost , which therefore placed an additional financial burden on those who were reliant on the existing services;

- A housing development consisting of 120 houses had recently been constructed in Auchendinny and had been marketed on the basis of existing bus services.
- The direct link to Morningside and the West end of Princes Street, Edinburgh, where a number of commuters were employed or required to make use of services, was removed by the revised services, as was the direct link to the Straiton Retail Park; Asda Store and IKEA;
- The petitioners understood that from Lothian buses that the decision to alter the bus routes had, in part, been a response by them to complaints from residents of Penicuik about the length of journey times;and
- The effect of the decision of Lothian buses would be to increase the numbers of car journeys , contrary to accepted public policy.

The Head of Commercial Operations advised that, whilst Lothian Buses were obliged to follow a consultation process in respect of route changes etc, this did not permit the Council to object to any such proposal nor did the Council have the power to veto any such proposal. The decision made by Lothian Buses was purely a commercial decision .

Thereafter, both the Petitioner and the Head of Commercial Operations were questioned by Elected members

Decision

- (a) To refer the petition to Lothian Buses and to ask them to review the situation particularly having regard to the needs of the communities of Roslin and Auchendinny; and
- (b) To instruct the Head of Commercial Operations to review the bus interchange provision within the locale with a view to ameliorating the effects of the changes in the No.15 and No.40 bus routes on the residents of Roslin and Auchendinny.

(Action: Head of Commercial Operations).

The meeting terminated at 11.10 am.