

098 Bus Service

The decision to review the sponsored local bus services was part of a wider review by Passenger Transport with Ipswich Buses as the result of a decision within this authority to make savings during the current financial year. The funding for our sponsored journeys was also being used to support the 'commercial' ones and therefore Ipswich Buses decided to withdraw these in addition. Their decision was based on their business case, that as a 'commercial' organisation, they could not sustain losses without assistance from Suffolk County Council.

The Operations Manager of Passenger Transport had a meeting with Councillor David Wood last week to discuss residents' concerns with the bus service. We are working closely with him regarding possible solutions and will keep you informed of future developments. We can confirm that there still be a through morning bus journey directly to Ipswich from Erwarnton and Harkstead and return in the afternoon Monday to Saturday on school and non school days. Hadleigh Community Transport (Tel: 01473 826242) will continue to operate in the area and we are in contact with the company to address any issues regarding performance and reliability. The revised timetable for the 98 and 98A will save Suffolk County Council £16,900 per annum. This is less than 1% of the total budget for the supported bus network throughout the county that is currently £1.9m.

Unfortunately, the situation remains that as a result of significant financial savings that have to be made within this authority, difficult decisions are being taken within all directorates about the future provision of services.

We are aware of the Ganges site development and the possibility that obtaining additional funding may assist with any future plans. If any external funding becomes available for additional bus services, this may be considered by Development Control in due course. Bus routes subject to agreement with interested bus companies can be introduced or frequencies amended with a minimum notice period of 56 days.

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