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Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise and Employment)

09 September 2013

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) – Councillor Kelly

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director, Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

None

**Title:**

Petition - Termination of Park and Ride North Services

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report sets out some of the issues surrounding the recent decision to stop Coventry's Park and Ride North service, which was effective from 26<sup>th</sup> July 2013. This follows an extended period of declining use of the service. The report sets out a petition presented to full Council on 23 July 2013 and which is to be forwarded to Centro (the West Midlands' Integrated Transport Authority), the organisation formally responsible for the decision, via the relevant Cabinet Member.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) is recommended to approve that the petition objecting to the termination of Park and Ride North services is forwarded to Centro to provide a formal response direct to the petitioner.

**List of Appendices included:**

None

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

**Report title:** Petition - Termination of Park and Ride North Services

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 The objective of park and ride is to allow the public to complete part of their journey by car and the remaining part by public transport. This can help to reduce congestion within busy areas such as city centres. In Coventry two bus-based park and ride services have been developed. The South Park and Ride was the first service launched in 1995 at the War Memorial Park, and the second was Park and Ride North launched in 1999 at Courthouse Green.
- 1.2 In June 2013 Centro, the Integrated Transport Authority for the West Midlands, took the decision to terminate contracts early for the operation of Park and Ride North bus services. Changes came into effect from 26<sup>th</sup> July 2013, ceasing the operation of all services from the site in Courthouse Green.
- 1.3 Usage levels for Park and Ride North peaked briefly in 2009/10 at 124,000 trips during the year, however since this time patronage levels have continually fallen to just 2.8 passengers per trip in 2013; less than Centro's minimum requirements of 5 per trip to justify a Centro tendered service.
- 1.4 Whilst the ownership of the site is shared between the City Council and Centro, bus services are operated under contract to Centro. The City Council does not currently provide any direct financial subsidy towards the operation of the service.
- 1.5 Centro recently carried out a survey to determine how users would travel should the service close and the majority of respondents said they would use an alternative bus service. Centro is planning to work with De Courcey Travel and the City Council to promote alternatives such as Park and Ride South and other mainstream bus services in the area.
- 1.6 The decision was made in response to falling patronage and corresponding increases in the level of revenue subsidy required to maintain operation of the service. The decision was made in agreement with the bus service operator (De Courcey Travel) who is understood to have been unable to viably operate the service, even with subsidy in place. The contract was due to expire on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 so for economic reasons a decision was taken by Centro to terminate the contract early.
- 1.7 In response to the closure a petition asking to "Save Park and Ride North" containing 253 signatures was presented by Councillor Harvard to the meeting of Full Council on 23 July 2013. Council resolved to recommend that the petition be referred to the appropriate City Council body and/or external organisation; and this has been determined to be the Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) – Councillor Kelly.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 Centro, the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, rather than the City Council are the responsible body for the management of park and ride bus service contracts, therefore it is recommended that Centro are asked to formally respond to the petition. The only alternative option would be for the City Council to respond to the petition but this is not appropriate for the reasons outlined above.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 Centro consulted ITA members, bus operators and the City Council about the proposed closure. Users of the service were not directly consulted on the closure as the reasons for it were solely due to factors around cost and patronage. Users were however surveyed to ascertain how they would travel should the service cease to operate.

### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 If the recommendation is agreed the petition will be forwarded immediately to Centro with a request for a formal response to be made direct to the petitioner.

### **5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report, however for information purposes the following should be noted.

The City Council and Centro are joint owners of the site on a 50/50 basis. Options for the long term use of the site are currently being reviewed. Closure of the site will reduce maintenance liabilities for the City Council as it will no longer be in public operation. Parts of the site have previously, and will continue to be used for the storage of Council resources in the intermediate period.

#### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **6. Other implications**

#### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The recommendation contained in this report will have no bearing on these implications.

#### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The recommendation contained in this report will have no bearing on these implications.

#### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

The recommendation contained in this report will have no bearing on these implications.

#### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

No equality impact assessment has been carried by the Council as the recommendation in this report does not constitute a change in service or policy by the Council.

#### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

The recommendation contained in this report will have no bearing on these implications.

#### **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Centro will be asked to formally respond to the petition.

**Report author(s):****Name and job title:**

Colin Knight, Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Highways

**Directorate:**

Place

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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Members: Councillor Kelly	Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment)		28/08/13	29/08/13

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