



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWNHOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Provost L Broun-Lindsay (Convenor)
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor W Innes
Councillor P MacKenzie

Other Councillors present:

None

Council Officials Present:

Mrs M Ferguson, Service Manager – Legal & Procurement
Mr I Dalgleish, Service Manager, Transport
Mr A McLellan, Transport Officer

Petitioners Present:

Mr M Fidgeon

Clerk:

Ms J Totney, Team Manager – Democratic Services

Apologies:

Councillor S Currie
Councillor M Veitch

Declarations of Interest:

None

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the Committee members and outlined the procedure that would be followed.

1. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE OF 11 JUNE 2015 (for approval)

The minutes of the Petitions Committee meeting of 11 June 2015 were agreed to be a true record.

2. PETITION 1504 – CALLING ON EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL TO REVERT BACK TO THE PREVIOUS TIMETABLE AND ROUTE FOR THE BUS SERVICE 120

3.

The Convenor invited Mr M Fidgeon to speak first regarding his petition. He advised that the changes to the route of Bus Service 120, in relation to North Berwick town centre, have resulted in inconvenience for elderly and infirm residents in North Berwick. He explained that people now have further to walk from the bus to places such as the library and Post Office and informed Members that the change to the bus timetabling was causing a lot of problems, with no reasons having been given for these changes. Mr Fidgeon was of the view that the number of people affected by the changes was significantly more than the 237 who had signed the petition. In response to Councillor MacKenzie Mr Fidgeon provided information about the location of the bus stops for the Service 120.

Mr I Dalgleish, Service Manager, Transport explained that there had been a public consultation regarding the provision of bus services. Overwhelmingly, the result of the consultation sought improvements in the connectivity between bus/bus services and bus/rail services. The changes to the route for Service 120 had been based on the outcome of the public consultation. Mr Dalgleish then outlined the process that had been used regarding the tender and the proposed changes to the route for Service 120. He advised that none of the tenders received had recommended reverting to the original route. He added that a road network study is being carried out in North Berwick and mentioned that changes to Service 120 could be considered. Mr Dalgleish took on board the point regarding the timetabling changes which, based on the public consultation feedback, had been made to improve the connections with trains from North Berwick to Edinburgh.

Mr Dalgleish responded to questions from committee members regarding the subsidy for the Service 120 and the pattern of passenger usage; informing Members that more people were using the Service 120 as a result of the route and timetabling changes. He advised that bus drivers would stop at 'The Old Hoose/Forth Street' even although there is no flagged bus stop and explained the reasons why this is not currently a permanent bus stop. He added that other traffic considerations in North Berwick would be included in the road network study. Responding to Councillor MacKenzie, he clarified the route of the Service 120 in North Berwick.

Mr A McLellan, Transport Officer, commented that there is now better flexibility for people and communities in North Berwick as a result of the route changes to Service 120. He added that supplementary bus services are provided by First Bus and talked about the bus hub in the town centre for connections to Edinburgh.

Provost Broun-Lindsay wondered if the people who had signed the petition had taken part in the public consultation and suggested that it tends to be people who want change that participate in consultations.

Councillor Innes commended Transport Services for the work they have done elsewhere to ensure that supported bus services, such as Service 120, meet the needs of local

communities. He acknowledged that Mr Dalgleish had reassured the committee that the matters raised by the petitioners have been taken seriously and would be taken on Board. Councillor Innes commented that while it would be not be correct to make any changes to the Service 120 until the road network study had been completed, and operational tweaks that could be made to help residents would be welcome.

Mr Dalgleish indicated that proposals have been discussed with the operator of Service 120 and that changes/improvements would be explored following this petitions committee meeting and the completion of the road network study.

Councillor Goodfellow commented that there are two conflicting groups of people who use the Service 120: those using the train and those who previously used the Service 120 as a direct route to the town centre. He remarked that the latter group had not made their views know as part of the public consultation. He stated that there needs to be more publicity to inform people that 'The Auld Hoose/Forth Street' is still in use as a bus stop. He requested that this be addressed quickly.

Provost Broun-Lindsay thanked Mr Fidgeon for bring this matter to the attention of the committee.

Decision

The Committee concluded that it could not support the request to revert back to the previous timetable for the Bus Service 120. However, the Committee appreciated the petitioners' issues and concerns and requested that the road network review takes account of the points made to see if a solution can be reached that addresses some of the problems raised.