

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT CABINET PANEL  
FRIDAY, 9 MARCH 2018 AT 10.00AM**

**REPORT ON PETITION REGARDING LOCAL BUS SERVICE 318**

*Report of the Chief Executive & Director of Environment*

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Executive Member:- Derrick Ashley, Environment, Planning & Transport

Local Members:- Sara Bedford, Abbots Langley  
Chris Hayward, Three Rivers Rural  
Richard Roberts, Kings Langley  
Tina Howard, Hemel Hempstead South East  
William Wyatt-Lowe, Hemel Hempstead Town

**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To enable the Panel to consider a petition which calls on “Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that the 318 bus route remains in operation.”

**2. Summary**

2.1 A petition promoted by Watford Liberal Democrats states that “The 318 bus provides a vital link for residents of the Abbots Langley area to Kings Langley and Hemel Hempstead. Mullany’s decision to cut part of the route will cause hardship and inconvenience for many residents. We therefore call on Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that this route remains in operation.” [save the 318 bus service](#)

2.2 Members are asked to consider the petition in the light of the information presented in this report.

**3. Recommendation**

3.1 The Panel is requested to note the petition.

- 3.2 The Panel note the low value for money priority of the route and no external resources have been secured to support the continuation of the service.
- 3.3 The Panel note the alternative services in the area and the work officers have undertaken to try and mitigate impacts at no additional cost.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 Bus service 318 is run by Mullany's Buses on a commercial basis, without support from the County Council. It originally operated between Watford and Abbots Langley but was extended to Hemel Hempstead in March 2013 using Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) following a successful bid to central government, and a time-limited financial contribution from Three Rivers District Council. This funding also supported other service enhancements on the route and the provision of newer vehicles.
- 4.2 The Hemel Hempstead extension was maintained after the LSTF monies had been fully spent but with reductions to the numbers of journeys operated from September 2014. However, the operator decided to withdraw the extension altogether from 5 February 2018 and revert to running only between Abbots Langley and Watford. Evening and Sunday services introduced with LSTF funding had already been discontinued because low passenger numbers made the timetable commercially unsustainable.
- 4.3 The route followed by the 318 from Abbots Langley to Hemel Hempstead is shown in Appendix 1 along with other bus services in the area and a summary of service frequencies.
- 4.4 Following public consultation, a set of new policies introduced in September 2015 enables the County Council to prioritise funding to the supported bus network on a value for money approach. Where a Monday-Saturday daytime service is concerned, the Council would seek to cost various levels of service, assess the usage and resulting revenue, and score the service against eight "Value for Money" criteria (see Appendix 2). Actual costs could only be determined through competitive tendering.
- 4.5 Mullany's have refused to engage with officers who have requested usage data and so on-bus observations of passenger usage have been carried out on a limited sample of journeys. Data collected indicates an average of 4.4 passengers per trip northbound from Abbots Langley to Hemel Hempstead and 3.3 passengers per trip in the southbound direction.

4.6 Officers have assessed three possible options which are as follows:

1. Hemel Hempstead – Kings Langley – Abbots Langley, an hourly all day service (including peaks) Monday to Friday, plus Saturday journeys
2. Hemel Hempstead – Kings Langley – Abbots Langley, an off-peak only service Monday to Friday, plus Saturday journeys
3. Abbots Langley – Kings Langley, two off-peak return journeys Monday to Friday only

Option	Estimated figures – per annum			Value for Money (VFM) score	Position in VFM table (out of 58 VFM contracts)	Number of lower scoring services affected by additional cost burden
	Cost	Revenue	Net cost			
1	£ 142,500	£ 39,100	£ 103,400	26	54	5
2	£ 72,500	£ 23,400	£ 49,100	29	52	4
3	£ 30,000	£ 12,500	£ 17,500	33	48	1

4.7 As can be seen from the map the alternative link from Abbots Langley to Kings Langley is the H19 County Council contract service which comprises one return journey two days a week. This is being extended to serve Station Road, Kings Langley from 3 April 2018 at no extra cost. The only alternative service for residents of this area is the contracted R8 which currently offers one return journey five days a week to the North Watford superstores, but which may be subject to review.

4.8 There are alternative bus services for residents living adjacent to all other sections of the route apart from (a) two stops in the Nash Mills area; and (b) the Primrose Hill – Lower Road section, served by only one journey each way, Monday to Friday.

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1 Other operators have expressed some interest in providing an Abbots Langley – Hemel Hempstead link but none is prepared to do so without financial assistance. Three Rivers District Council supports certain bus services, but its policy is to do so only on a kick-start basis for new routes. Currently Dacorum Borough Council does not fund any bus services and have confirmed no funding would be available for a 318 replacement.

5.2 Local Members can provide support for contracted services through the Locality Budget scheme.

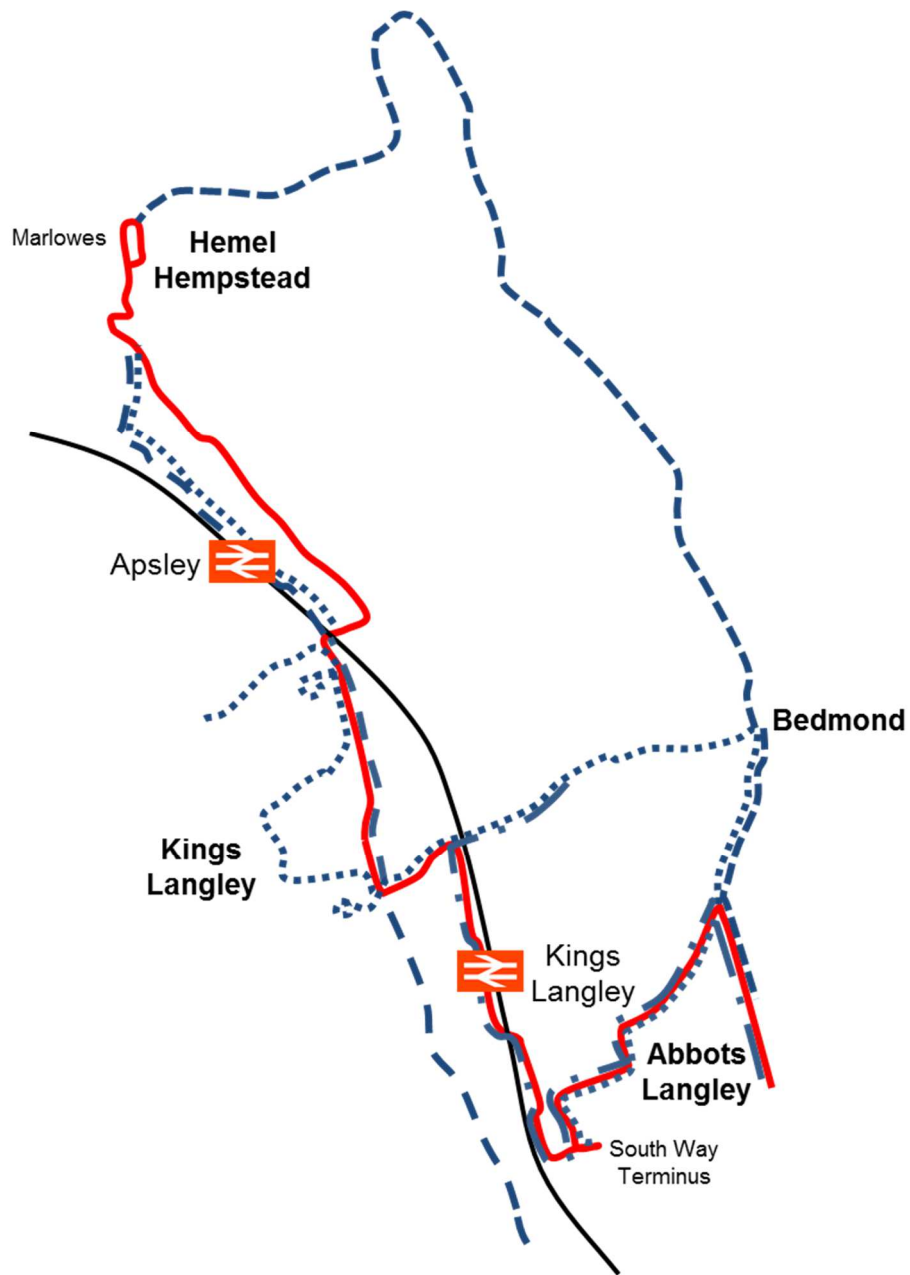
5.3 In the absence of external contributions, it would fall to the County Council to pay for any replacement out of its local bus budget, which is

already fully committed, supporting other contracted services across the county. When evaluated against the Value for Money criteria all three options provided poor value.

## **6. Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 6.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EQiA) produced by officers.
- 6.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the County Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.4 The commercial bus operator's decision to reduce or withdraw a service was not subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) as it is a private body and it is not carrying out a function on behalf of the county council. Detailed usage data has not been made available by the operator but based on knowledge of the wider bus networks and users, it is probable that a number of elderly or disabled passengers will be adversely impacted.

**Appendix 1: Details of Hemel Hempstead to Abbots Langley bus services**



Key	Service	Route	Runs
.....	H19	Abbots Langley – Hemel Hempstead	2 journeys per week (Tue and Thu)
— . —	R8	Bedmond - Watford	1 journey per day, Mon-Fri
————	318	Watford – Hemel Hempstead, curtailed at Abbots Langley from 05/02/2018	2 per hour Mon-Fri, hourly Sat
-----	320	Rickmansworth – Hemel Hempstead	2 per hour Mon-Sat, hourly Sun
— — —	500	Aylesbury – Watford	3 per hour Mon-Fri, 2 per hour Sat, hourly Sun



## **Appendix 2: Value for Money criteria**

### **Hertfordshire County Council Bus Strategy Value for Money criteria**

In general the County Council will not provide funding for:

- a. Services or journeys operating in the evenings after 1930 hours.
- b. Services or journeys operating on Sundays unless they directly serve hospitals in which case they would run until 1930 hours.
- c. Special services for home to school transport unless there is a statutory requirement to provide free transport.
- d. Services operating beyond the nearest suitable destination outside the county unless there is a funding contribution from the relevant neighbouring authority or a reciprocal cross boundary agreement.

To manage within available financial resources at any given time for the bus network as a whole, the County Council will take account of the following factors and needs in the order set out below in determining route and service patterns:

1. the availability of commercial /other bus services in the area
2. the cost per passenger on each service
3. the number of passengers
4. the level of use by elderly and passengers with disabilities
5. other alternatives available, including choice of destinations and other travel modes, including community transport options
6. the net cost of contracts
7. the likely future role of the service
8. travel by young people for whom the county council has a statutory duty to provide transport between home and school/college

All services will be kept under review and the criteria may be applied to individual journeys or sections of route where the service as a whole meets the criteria.

For services where the County Council contributes to a contract provided by another authority, the criteria adopted by the contracting authority will apply, subject to the County Council estimating whether the service within Hertfordshire would meet its own criteria and whether it could provide the service more effectively itself.

For services funded through development, by other authorities or from other external sources, the above criteria will not apply during the funding period but the County Council will adopt its own criteria if the service is transferred to County Council funding.