

KM/SGP/BH

12th November, 2014.

Mr William Powell AC/AM
Chair Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Dear Mr. Powell,

Thank you for your letter concerning a petition from John James, regarding a direct bus service from Burry Port to Prince Philip Hospital.

You will be aware that the local bus sector, together with Local Authorities, has seen a reduction in funding support since 2012. Carmarthenshire County Council has worked with local bus operators to mitigate the impact of reductions in support and has tried to sustain the local bus network, as much as possible. This exercise has been extremely challenging for Carmarthenshire. Rural authorities typically have to subsidise over seventy percent of their network.

Consequently, service reductions were implemented in accordance with the priorities set out below

Priority 1: Remove services where alternatives are available for users

Priority 2: Remove evening and Sunday services with the lowest level of social need

Priority 3: Remove remaining evening and Sunday services

The Authority also worked with operators to identify any potential savings in the network where individual journeys, or, parts of journey could be removed resulting in cost savings whilst having minimal effects on passenger numbers.

Specifically in relation to Burry Port, services were reduced as a result of a withdrawal of a commercial, unsubsidised service. The former "L4" and "L5" services interworked and provided a direct service to Prince Philip Hospital, seven times per day. Four of the seven workings involved a journey time of forty eight minutes, passengers were therefore likely to have changed buses at Llanelli bus Station to reduce the overall journey time. The L4 and L5 services were withdrawn by the commercial operator in May, due to a lack of patronage.

Burry Port is still served by public transport. The X11 service provides a half hourly service, with a connection to a service to Prince Philip Hospital at 30 minutes past the hour, from Llanelli bus station. The Authority also provides a demand responsive service around Burry Port for the community. This Demand Responsive service connects with the main X11 service up until 1545 six days a week.

Given the extent of funding reductions in the Local Government settlement moving forward , I am unable to commit and indeed find any revenue, to support any additional public transport services. Officers, will however work, with the bus operators and the Local Community to promote the existing services that are available.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Kevin Madge,
Leader of the Council.