

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 25 November 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Receipt of Petition - Withdrawal of Sunday Evening Commercial Service X1 Operated By Arriva Northwest

WARDS: Halton Castle, Windmill Hill, Halton Lea, Mersey, Riverside

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Board of a petition that has been received from the residents of Murdishaw and surrounding areas following the withdrawal of the commercially operated Arriva Northwest X1 service from Liverpool City Centre, on Sunday evenings from 19:00hrs.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) given the existing alternative services available, an extension to the X1 service should not be supported using Council funding; and

(2) the organisers of the petition be advised of the decision.

- 3.1 A petition was received on 25th August 2009, signed by 37 residents, (see Appendix 1), concerning the withdrawal of the commercial Arriva Northwest X1 service from Liverpool City Centre, on Sunday Evenings from 1900hrs. The basis of their concerns is that there are a number of elderly people, (some of whom don't have alternative transport), who, on occasions like to go into Liverpool for shopping, theatre and other purposes, but are unable to return home after 19:00hrs, without the added expense of a taxi fare. The accompanying letter also identifies that whilst there is an alternative service, (79C) that could be used to return to Runcorn, this would result in a much longer return journey time. The letter also makes the more general point that the service withdrawal also makes it difficult to go to Liverpool and other locations outside of Runcorn for fear of not getting back on Sunday evenings. The petitioners request that the X1 hours of operation be extended so that the last journey on Sunday evenings departs from Liverpool at 22:00hrs.
- 3.2 Arriva Northwest operate the commercial service X1 Monday – Friday on a half hourly frequency from 06:00hrs until 19:00hrs and then hourly until 22:00hrs, with the last journey leaving Liverpool at 23:15hrs. On

Saturdays, the same frequency is operated, with the exception of the last journey, which leaves Liverpool at 22:00hrs. The Sunday service operates on an hourly frequency commencing at 10:00hrs with the last journey leaving Liverpool at 19:00hrs. The current level of service has been in operation since 6th May 2007.

3.4 There are in fact two alternative public transport services available, should a return journey to Runcorn be required after 10:00hrs on a Sunday. It is, however, accepted that these services would take longer to return to Runcorn, than the X1 service. The alternative services available are:

- The 79C service, which operates on a 30 minute frequency all day Sunday and Sunday evenings until 23:17hrs between Liverpool and Murdishaw Centre. Additional journey time to Runcorn would be approximately 29 minutes; and
- There is also a rail service from Lime Street rail station to Runcorn mainline station in operation with the last journey departing Liverpool at 21:34hrs. However, it would be necessary to change at Runcorn station to get the 79C local bus service to Murdishaw. Additional journey time to Murdishaw would be approximately 20 minutes.

3.5 Arriva Northwest have indicated that the service after 19:00hrs on a Sunday evening is not commercially viable and would therefore only be re-instated with a financial contribution from the Council.

3.6 It is estimated that the annual cost of extending the X1 service on a Sunday evening to 22:00hrs would be in the region of £18,000. The Council currently has a budget to provide socially necessary services, which cannot be operated on a commercial basis. Unfortunately, this budget is under severe pressure and given that there are alternative facilities available, it is felt that it would be inappropriate to fund the extension.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific policy implications resulting from this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 **Resource Implications:** There are no resource implications from the recommendations made in this report. However, it is noted that the estimated cost of providing the extended service would be around £18,000.

5.2 Social Inclusion Implications: The proposals contained within the report identify existing alternative public transport services, which although are not as convenient as extending the X1 service, as requested, do provide a means of returning to Runcorn on a Sunday evening .

6.0 Implications for Council's Priorities

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton – There are no direct implications resulting from this report.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills - There are no direct implications resulting from this report.

6.3 A Healthy Halton:- There are no direct implications resulting from this report.

6.4 A Safer Halton:- There are no direct implications resulting from this report.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal;- There are no direct implications resulting from this report.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS;- There are no direct risks associated with the recommendations contained within the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES;- There are no direct implications resulting from this report, as alternative facilities have been identified.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None