

REPORT FOR INFORMATION

REPORT TO:	All Members
REPORT NO:	HEP/102/17
DATE:	18 December 2017
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David A Bithell, Lead Member for Place – Environment & Transport
CONTACT OFFICER:	Darren Williams (Tel 729639)
SUBJECT:	Bus Services in Wrexham

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on the current position with regard to bus services in Wrexham following the operational withdrawal of D Jones & Son

INFORMATION

Background Information

- 1 At 14:30 on Friday 15 December, officers received word of potential significant disruption to transport services. It was indicated that a transport operator, D Jones & Son, was anticipating ceasing operations on Saturday 16 December with no vehicles leaving the depot from the morning of Sunday 17 December. Officers were made aware that D Jones & Son had not given closure notice to staff at this time, but that they intended to on Saturday 16 December.
- 2 D Jones & Son were the largest independent transport provider currently operating in Wrexham County Borough providing commercial, school and private contract services throughout Wrexham, Denbighshire and into Cheshire and Shropshire. Wrexham Council benefited from a number of 'commercially' run local services, a relatively small proportion of subsidised tendered local services and a range of private contract services for home to school transport.
- 3 On notification of the likely termination, officers immediately sought alternative provision for the statutory education transport services and by Sunday evening they were able to confirm seven substitute operators to ensure the provision of the statutory school bus services until the end of this term (Friday 22/12/17).
- 4 Officers are urgently examining gaps in the local bus network to determine the wider impacts and to identify the need and scope for any replacement services in line with the contingency plan adopted following the closure of GHA Coaches in July 2016.

The contingency plan, as detailed in **Appendix A**, mirrors the procurement process for local bus services and aligns with the criteria for supported local bus services approved by the Executive Board in 2013 (HE/08/13).

Impacts on the bus network

5. The tables below summarise the impact of this closure.

School buses affected	Area Served	Seats	New Operator
Ysgol Morgan Llwyd	Gwersyllt	53 seats	Straffords Coaches
St Joseph's/St Mary's	Brymbo	45 seats	Unicorn Travel
St Joseph's/St Mary's	Gresford	53 seats	E Jones & Son
St Joseph's/St Mary's	Coedpoeth	53 seats	G Edwards & Son
Garth CP	Trevor	30 seats	E Jones & Son
Ysgol Bro Alun/Plas Coch/ Ysgol Bodhyfryd	Marford/Llay	33 seats	Pats Coaches
Ysgol Bro Alun/Plas Coch/ Ysgol Bodhyfryd	Tanyfron	33 seats	Pats Coaches

Local bus services affected

Service 5	Wrexham to Llangollen
Service 9	Wrexham to Minera
Service 10	Wrexham to Bwlchwyn
Service 13b	Wrexham to Wrexham Industrial Estate
Service 35	Plas Golbourne
Service 44	Garden Village
Service 41/42	Wrexham Industrial Estate
Service J50	Wrexham to Acrefair
Service 6	Wrexham to Ruabon
Service 41b/42b	Wrexham to HMP Berwyn
Service C56	Wrexham to Chester via Holt
Service 146	Wrexham to Whitchurch

Communication Strategy

- 6 Officers are working with the Council's press team on a communication strategy to prepare consistent messages highlighting the Council's responsibilities for public transport services, in summary these are:-

Transport Act 1985:-

- i. Secure the provision of such public transport services as they consider appropriate to meet any public transport requirements which would not otherwise be met.
 - ii. Enter into an agreement providing for service subsidies where the service in question would not be provided or would not be provided to a particular standard without subsidy.
- 7 The Council does not itself provide local bus services or run a transport fleet of buses.

Next Steps

- 8 During the school holiday and before return on week commencing 8 January 2018, officers will seek to procure permanent private contract services for home to school transport. This will ensure that we meet our statutory obligations in line with the Learner Travel Wales Measure.
- 9 Officers are currently analysing the supported local bus network in line with the criteria adopted by the Executive Board:
 - Service costs
 - Popularity and patronage of service
 - Index of Multiple Deprivation Score (of communities served)
 - Availability of and contribution to the existing transport network
- 10 Further update reports will be provided at milestones indicated in **Appendix A**, early in the New Year and of course any shortfall picked up by existing operators will be publicised as soon as they are secured

Appendix A

	Action	Description	Timescale	Due Date
1	Communication strategy	Work with the Lead Member and press team to issue consistent messages on the Council's (limited) responsibilities and actions taken to mitigate the effects.	On-going	On-going
2	Identify need	Analysis based on the criteria for supported local bus services adopted by Executive Board (HE/08/13): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service costs• Popularity and patronage of service• Index of Multiple Deprivation Score (of communities served)• Availability of and contribution to the existing transport network	1 week	27/12/17
3	Scope Service	Consider the scope of the service to be provided including an assessment of routing, timetables and bus (and driver) operational hours. During this time we would also gauge the likelihood of other providers/ operators taking up the routes commercially and only move to procurement if they don't.	1 week	05/01/18
4	Procurement	Dependent on financial assessments, the tender period should be kept to a minimum whilst allowing sufficient time for the market to respond and a full tender evaluation to take place.	3 weeks	26/01/18
5	Contract Award	This period should take account of 'stand-still' periods, etc.	2 weeks	12/02/18
6	Service Registration	The successful operator is required formally to register the service. Whilst the regulator, 'The Office of the Traffic Commissioner' may consider a relaxation to statutory notice periods, the 'minimum' period is 56 days which is nominally adjusted to 70 days to reflect administration time. Services are unable to run and collect paying fares without formal registration	10 weeks	23/04/18