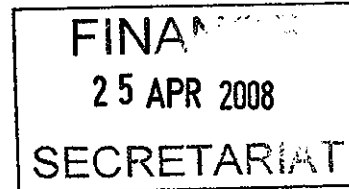


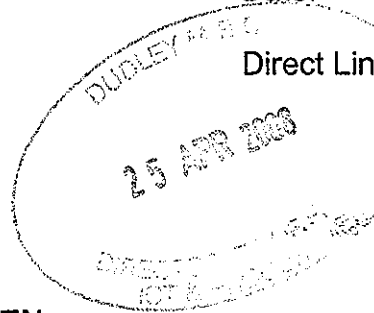


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Mr Mike Williams
Directorate Of Finance, ICT And Procurement
Council House
Priory Road
Dudley
DY1 1HL

Our ref: CR100023088
Your ref: MSW/klp/3572
Date: 22 April 2008
Direct Line: 0121 214 7214



Dear Mr Williams,

BUS SERVICES IN HALESOWEN

Thank you for your recent letter on behalf of the Halesowen Area Committee relating to bus services in the Hasbury and Hayley Green area addressed Mr Geoff Inskip. I have been asked to respond on his behalf.

I hope that members of the committee will have seen the information pack on the proposed Dudley Network Review back in December when it was distributed to each area committee via Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, at the same time inviting them to a meeting on the Network Review and inviting comments. This pack contained information on the reasons for the network review and the requirement to modernise the network and reduce the long-term decline in bus patronage in the area.

Centro has obtained passenger numbers for the service 211 from the current operator Travel West Midlands (TWM) as this is no longer commercially viable to the operator. The total number of passengers per day using this service between Merry Hill and Hasbury is an average of 29 per day, equating to about 1 passenger per journey. This falls well below the 5 per journey minimum required to meet the Passenger Transport Authority's requirements for the provision of a subsidised service, and there are alternative bus services linking the area to Halesowen Town Centre from where there are nine buses per hour to Merry Hill.

Notwithstanding this, Centro has now agreed with bus operator Ludlow that service 007 will be diverted via Huntingtree Road rather than Stourbridge Road. This has now restored a direct link from Hasbury to Merry Hill at no cost to the public purse.

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Chairman: **Cllr. Gary Clarke**. Chief Executive: **Geoff Inskip**.





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Service 247/248 is also operated by TWM and they have provided similar patronage information showing that less than 0.5% of passengers travelled between Russells Hall Hospital and Hasbury. The passenger numbers also fall below Centro's minimum requirement for the provision of a direct service on a subsidised basis. TWM also wished to change the route 247/248 to improve reliability and now terminate the service at Dudley as the new 242 service from April 27.

Centro appreciates the need for good public transport links to hospitals and, although it is not possible to provide a direct service from all parts of the Borough to Russells Hall, we have ensured that adequate interchange facilities are available for those without a direct service. During the daytime, there are 18 departures an hour from Dudley Bus Station to the Hospital which Hasbury passengers will be able to change to and from the new 242.

We acknowledge that for some passengers their journey will involve interchanging at one of Centro's Bus Stations including the new £3.5m bus station currently being redeveloped at Halesowen for opening later this year. Whilst we cannot provide direct services to all places in the borough, by using interchange facilities we can provide faster and more direct links from the main centres and the bus operators can redeploy resource to enhance services, increase overall bus patronage and safeguard the network into the future.

I hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to can me again if I can assist you further.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Rhodes
Bus & Highways Director