

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION

Miss Bronwen Morgan, LL.B.
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive



CEREDIGION County Council

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron, SA46 0PA

☎ 01545 572000
Ffacs/Fax 01545 572009
bronwenm@ceredigion.gov.uk
www.ceredigion.gov.uk
DX 92401 ABERAERON

Dyddiad
Date

2nd November, 2012

Fy nghyf
My ref

BM

Eich cyf
Your ref

P-04-380

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

Dear William Powell,

Petition against the removal of scheduled Bus services from East Lampeter, Cwmann and Pencarreg

I refer to your letter dated 22nd October, 2012 regarding the above. Please find below the Authority's response.

Since 27th of February, 2012 the main bus service from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen now numbered 40, 20 or 10 have been operated by Arriva Buses Wales on a wholly commercial basis. This action was undertaken as a business decision by the company with the consequence that the previous supported service X40 could no longer be provided under current UK legislation - Transport Act 1985

40 service - Aberystwyth to Carmarthen
20 service - Aberystwyth to Carmarthen and Cardiff
10 service - Aberystwyth to Carmarthen and Swansea

Until 26th of February, 2012 the X40 TrawsCambria bus service between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen via Aberaeron and Lampeter was also operated by Arriva Buses Wales under 'de-minimis' contract agreements to both Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils, with Ceredigion County Council acting as lead Authority for the reimbursement of payments to the operator.

The annual revenue subsidy paid to Arriva by Ceredigion County Council and Carmarthenshire County Council amounted to £137,632. The bus company was also provided with a fleet of eight dedicated low floor buses (owned by Ceredigion) on a rental basis to provide high quality vehicles on the route.

As these arrangements had been in place since 2005, when First Cymru and Arriva operated the route to form the X40 service, legal advice obtained by the Welsh Government and Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils strongly recommended that the X40 service now needed to be fully re-tendered by April 2012. It was agreed by the TrawsCymru management group that Carmarthenshire County Council would take the lead on the new tendering exercise.

At this point Arriva had made no declarations of interest in running the service commercially and continued to receive the subsidy payment. In fact at one point earlier the previous year they had asked for a substantially increased payment or would withdraw the service.

During the tendering exercise, Mr. Michael Morton (Managing Director of Arriva Buses Wales) wrote to officials of the Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council, stating that "Arriva considers the X40 to be a commercial service and.....the entire section between Aberystwyth and Aberaeron and between Lampeter and Cardiff is wholly commercial".

On the day that the tendering exercise closed, Arriva registered a new fully commercial service from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen via Aberaeron, Lampeter, Llanwnnen and Llanybydder along the A475 and B4337. This new route deviated from the previous X40 by omitting the Cribyn section and the route along the A485 from Cwmann to Llanybydder in Carmarthenshire.

UK legislation precludes the provision of a subsidy by Local Authorities to an operator to provide a service in competition to a commercial service operating along a route and as a consequence neither Carmarthenshire or Ceredigion were in a position to provide support for any other service competing against the Arriva registered services.

The new Arriva services were registered on the new routes as the service time from Aberystwyth to Carmarthen was reduced.

Since first operating the services Arriva Buses Wales has recently started to reduce the number of journeys operated especially evening and Sunday journeys on the corridor.

Arriva gave the Traffic Commissioner the statutory 56 days' notice of their intention to start running new commercial bus services on the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen bus corridor. During this period, staff from the Welsh Government, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion County Council's had numerous discussions with Mr Michael Morton and his senior management team before the launch of the new Arriva services. The following proposals and arrangements were discussed:

- The continued availability of the successful West Wales Rover Ticket on the corridor, which is an established and very popular multi operator ticket.
- The continued provision of good connections at Aberaeron between the new Arriva services and other longer distance services linking Aberystwyth and Cardigan.
- Good alternative transport arrangements continued to be provided for statutory school age scholars whose journeys to and from school could have been seriously disrupted due to changes to services introduced by Arriva.

- Arrangements for connections with the expanded Bwcabus rural transport scheme, enabling passengers to connect to the new Arriva services at key hubs from a wider number of rural settlements along the corridor.

All of the above arrangements were published in the communities affected by the Arriva initiated changes.


Working closely with Bus Users Cymru a series of Bus User Surgeries were organised at key centres, both immediately before and after the changes.

Both Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion County Councils have sought to maximise the potential of the recently expanded Bwcabus Scheme to offer good connections from a wider range of rural settlements into the longer distance bus network at key interchange hubs.

Arriva Buses Wales was invited to participate in the public consultation exercise undertaken by the Welsh Government on the development of the longer distance TrawsCymru network in the Autumn of 2010.

Responsibility for promoting the new Arriva commercial service and for informing the communities of the changes in route operation fell on the operator.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Bronwen Morgan
Prif Weithredwr
Chief Executive