

Nature of Petition	Appropriate Service/Officer	Summary of Information	Status of Petition
<p>Petition 407</p> <p>Improve Bus Services for to Support Work, Health Services and Education</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received 24.9.21</p> <p>No. of signatures – 43</p> <p>Paper petition no. of signatures – 178</p>	<p>Dave Wafer</p> <p>Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to carry out a review of subsidies to the private bus companies to ensure that they are utilised to support residents from the most disadvantaged, rural areas to access work and education. Write to the government to petition them to fund bus services in order to support residents in accessing work and education. Analyse the effect of the cut to bus services alongside the proposed 'digital switchover' for 2025 to enable the Council to plan for the future to ensure no rural part of County Durham becomes further isolated and at further disadvantage.</p> <p>By way of background the vast majority of bus services across County Durham are operated on a commercial basis, although with Government support during the Covid pandemic. Alongside the commercial services the County Council supports approximately 20% of our bus network with £2.5 of funding maintaining more remote communities and the less popular but important travel times. The end result pre-covid was that we had a stable and reliable public transport network that was beginning to show some signs of growth after many years of decline.</p> <p>However the impacts on Covid should not be underestimated with passenger numbers only returning to 75% of pre-covid levels before a further downturn with the advent of the Omicron variant. Whatever happens with the progression of the virus it is clear that passenger numbers are going to take a significant time to recover.</p> <p>Within County Durham we have seen two recent impacts with a relatively small number of services being withdrawn at the end of last year and a number of temporary timetable changes brought in to try and reduce reliability issues brought about by Covid related driver shortages. However, the County Council has responded to many of the changes by amending our subsidised</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

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		<p>routes so that accessibility across the County saw a decline of only 0.2%. In addition the majority of the temporary changes are now reverting back to the original timetables.</p> <p>We do not however underestimate the task ahead. Across the Country bus operators are currently reliant on Covid support from central government and it is anticipated that this funding is due to come to an end.. This needs to be set against the fact that shopping patterns have changed, and more people are set to work from home potentially into the medium term.</p> <p>As a region we have been setting out a clear vision for public transport and agreeing to enter into an Enhanced Partnership with operators with a view to securing government funding to improve services, however the outcome of the bid won't be known until later this month.</p> <p>The petition asks that we review bus subsidies and that will be the case as we review the provision of bus services across the County to provide the best possible range of services. However currently the level of government support remains uncertain and County Council resources are finite.</p> <p>We are currently working with operators and have had an initial meeting with a representative of each AAP to start to consider what a post pandemic bus network might look like, and further information and consultation will take place in the coming months.</p>	

Petition Table – Active Petitions

Appendix 2

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<p>Petition 408</p> <p>Bishop Auckland By-pass</p> <p>Petition received 11.11.21</p> <p>No. of signatures – 805</p>	<p>Amy Harhoff</p> <p>Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to undertake a full consultation with residents and business owners to decide the best route for the proposed by-pass at Bishop Auckland.</p> <p>The County Council had previously considered the issue of the proposed Toft Hill bypass most recently at the Council meeting on the 23 June 2021 and it was resolved that</p> <p>“This Council believes that the proposed new Toft Hill bypass (from near the Sportsmans Arms to the junction of the A68 Hartbrigg Lane), provision for which was made in the Levelling Up bid approved by Cabinet on 16 June 2021 will bring relief to the residents of Toft Hill, with no effect on traffic through West Auckland and commits to working with the people, Parish Council and Councillors of West Auckland, St Helen Auckland and Spring Gardens to prepare the case for a bypass for these communities.”</p> <p>The issues caused by traffic travelling through Toft Hill have been continually raised by Local members, Parish Council, the Local MP and local residents on a significant number of occasions. It is for this reason that a bypass of Toft Hill was included in the regional Local Transport Plan, consulted upon last year. The proposed route of the Toft Hill Bypass has been consistent over the past 20 years.</p> <p>We are aware that a different and longer route has recently been proposed bypassing both Toft Hill and Spring Gardens. However this route has not been put forward previously to the County Council prior to Spring 2021, and has not been proposed or included in any local or regional plans including the recently adopted 2020 regional transport strategy or 2020 County Durham Plan both of which required a full public consultation.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

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		<p>An examination of this new and indicative proposal shows that it would be over twice the length and cross the recently installed flood defences for West Auckland. Whilst the Toft Hill Bypass can be delivered for £12 million, the new proposal would cost in excess of £30 million.</p> <p>The need for a bypass of Toft Hill was recently recognised by Government who will contribute £20 million to a package of over £30 million of improvements across the area including £12million of funding for the Toft Hill project. The likely cost of the indicative longer route makes it unaffordable from either the levelling up or indeed any other funding regime available at this time.</p> <p>The council remain happy to work with the residents and Parish of West Auckland to look at any current traffic concerns and consider options for future improvements.</p>	
<p>Petition 409</p> <p>Build a public footpath between Haswell Plough and Shotton.</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 24.11.21 No. of signatures –</p>	<p>Dave Wafer Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to build a footpath between Haswell Plough and Shotton for the safety of residents and visitors.</p>	<p>E-petition to run until 30 April</p>
<p>Petition 410</p> <p>To create an indoor space that is suitable for activities such as Skateboarding, BMXing, Roller skating etc.</p>	<p>Nigel Dodds Strategic Manager Leisure</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to create an indoor space that is suitable for activities such as Skateboarding, BMXing, Roller skating etc.</p> <p>Indoor venues for wheeled sports such as skateboarding, BMX, roller skating etc. require considerable investment which Skateboarding GB recognise as national and regional venues rather than local. Such venues can cost in excess of £2 million</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

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<p>E-Petition Petition received 24.12.21 No. of signatures – 106</p>		<p>pounds and would require significant income generation if they are to be sustainably operated by a local authority.</p> <p>Indeed many indoor venues are operated by volunteers from the various sporting communities that utilise the venues, and operate either as charities or small businesses with charitable obligations. If Durham County Council were to invest in a regional facility it would need to have a robust business case. When DCC initially analysed the market for indoor skateparks, as part of the leisure transformation programme, the closest were in Gateshead, Jarrow and Darlington, unfortunately the former has closed but Darlington and Jarrow remain. Considerable feasibility work would need to be redone to see if the closure of the park in Gateshead would make a Durham park viable. However, it was unlikely to be viable as a Council operated venue. Any development would require an independent company to be created, similar to 4Motion Darlington with the Council providing support.</p> <p>With regards to issues of anti-social behaviour, there are very few reported incidents involving those from the wheeled sports community. DCC were aware of either through direct management or support to Towns and Parishes of 32 outdoor skate parks across the County with one new park currently in the design stage.</p> <p>DCC remain committed to outdoor provision but recognise that this does not provide an opportunity for participants to engage in their sport across the full calendar year. DCC will work with the wheeled sports community to try and identify opportunities and our officers have been engaging with ‘Shred the North’ over the last 12 months to look at possibilities. Unfortunately, this has not yet resulted in a positive outcome but officers would continue to</p>	

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		engage with all stakeholders in order to ensure any opportunities to develop an indoor park are given the due consideration.	
<p>Petition 411</p> <p>Pool hire for swimming and water polo groups</p> <p>E-Petition</p> <p>Petition received 9.1.22</p> <p>No. of signatures – 136</p>	<p>Nigel Dodds</p> <p>Strategic Manager Leisure</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to Halt the fifty percent increase in pool hire for swimming and water polo groups.</p> <p>Durham County Council recognises the valuable contributions that swimming and water polo clubs make to the wider community in engaging large groups of people, particularly younger persons in positive physical activity. However, we have to consider the level of subsidy we provide to such clubs in a much wider context, including equity, fairness, and the wider regional and national provision of such activities.</p> <p>Following local government review in 2009, fees and charges to swimming and water polo clubs had been left untouched until a review took place in 2018. As part of this review the Council sought information from Swim England regarding the cost per lane per hour being charged to clubs. At this time the regional average was circa £13 per hour and nationally £15. At the time clubs in County Durham pools were paying from as little as £1.42 up to a maximum of £7.95, the average charge being £3.95.</p> <p>Officers presented price increases to clubs in 2019, and whilst these prices were not met favourably by clubs, it was agreed that fees be increased incrementally over a 4-year period until the cost per lane per hour reached £12. Clubs were offered support in business planning to help them meet the rise in costs.</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

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		<p>The proposed increases were as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019/20 - £5 per hour per lane (to be implemented September 1st, 2019) • 2020/21 - £7.50 per hour per lane (April 2020) • 2021/22 - £10.00 per hour per lane • 2022/23 - £12.00 per hour per lane <p>At the time a number of clubs contacted local members and meetings between Officers and the Portfolio Holder resulted in the £12, 4th year cost being capped at £10 and no increases until April 2020</p> <p>Therefore, the following increases would be implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020/21 - £5 per hour per lane (this was implemented in July 2020 when pools reopened following lockdown 1) • 2021/22 - £7.50 per hour per lane (this was delayed 12 months due to covid) • 2022/23 - £10.00 per hour per lane (will now be implemented in 2023/24) <p>Due to the pandemic the 2021/22 price increase didn't come into force and remained at £5 per hour per lane to provide clubs additional time to recover, there were also a significant amount of Covid recovery grants available for sports clubs to access.</p> <p>Following receipt of this petition officers have again reviewed the regional charges to swimming clubs which remains just above £13 per lane per hour, with some clubs having to pay as much as £21. Whilst we recognise that this year's fee for some clubs in the County is a 50% increase we have to take into consideration the very favourable fees and charges for the majority of clubs in the county have been charged. Clubs who were already paying over the £5 per hour will not have such a</p>	

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		<p>high increase and those paying more than £7.50 will remain frozen on their 2018 fee until the cap goes above their threshold.</p> <p>The phasing of these increases as well as the offers of support from officers is fair and appropriate. The clubs who utilise our facilities either voluntary or other, to provide activities for the community do a wonderful job but we as a council have to try and recover enough of our costs to make these venues remain sustainable, otherwise they will become too much of a burden on the public purse.</p>	
<p>Petition 412</p> <p>Speeding Bishop Middleham and Mainsforth</p> <p>Petition received 25.1.22</p> <p>No. of signatures – 27</p>	<p>Michelle McIntosh Traffic Assets Team Leader</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to investigate installing a speed measuring wire across the estate and if excessive consider speed reduction measures.</p> <p>Regretfully, the County Council receive more requests for traffic calming and traffic engineering measures than it is able to fund from limited road safety budgets. Due to the need to concentrate resources on reducing casualty accidents Highway Authorities are required to direct their limited funding towards addressing locations with known and proven accident problems.</p> <p>Having checked the accident recording database shared with Durham Constabulary, there have been no recorded 'personal injury' accidents on The Park in the past four years, being the standard search criteria. When compared to many other locations, this represents a favourable accident record with priority continuing to be directed to locations with a known and proven accident problem.</p> <p>As part of the partnership approach to improving road safety all speeding complaints are directed towards Durham Constabulary and their Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings, enabling the appropriate level of intervention and action to be considered. Historic speed data is held for this location which</p>	<p>Petition CLOSED</p>

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Appendix 2

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		<p>shows no issues with excessive speed. It is therefore likely that the issue may be inappropriate speed, meaning vehicles driving too fast for the conditions but not contravening the speed limit, rather than excess speed which is both inappropriate and in excess of the speed limit.</p> <p>It is recommended that the speeding concerns should be discussed with the police and should they require new survey data to investigate they would make this request to Durham County Council.</p>	
<p>Petition 414</p> <p>Traffic Calming Measures at The Blue House - Haswell and Shotton Colliery</p> <p>E-Petition Petition received 15.2.22 No. of signatures –</p>	<p>Dave Wafer Head of Transport and Contract Services</p>	<p>Petition asking the Council to review and examine the traffic measures currently in place at the junction between the B1283 and B1280 Salters Lane, commonly known as The Blue House junction located between the villages of Haswell and Shotton Colliery.</p>	<p>e-petition to run until 30 April 2022</p>