



## Update on Kempsey Bus Services

11<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Due to recent correspondence regarding the bus service changes in Kempsey in September 2008, I thought it would be useful to set out the background and current actions to ensure the correct information is being disseminated to the various stakeholders. This document has been produced in co-operation with both First and Astons Coaches.

### Pre-September 2008

- First operated Route 32 commercially on a 30 minute frequency between Ombersley Road, Worcester – City Centre – Kempsey/Baynhall.

### September 2008

- Astons Coaches registered a competing commercial service on Route 32 (between Baynhall/Kempsey and the City Centre only) on an hourly frequency.
- First responded to the commercial competition by consolidating their service and strengthening the stronger sections :
  - 20 minute frequency between Ombersley Rd – City Centre – St. Peter's
  - Peak time journeys only extending to Kempsey/Baynhall
- As a commercial company, First acted to protect their commercial interests and they have received complements for improvements to the service in the City areas due to the 20 minute frequency.
- Astons Coaches registered their service as Route 32 as this is the recognised number for the area.
- As both First and Astons Coaches are running their respective services commercially, Worcestershire County Council does not have jurisdiction to insist on specific routes/timetables/fares/frequencies, and the Council is not permitted under legislation to register a competing service which may detriment their commercial operation by abstraction.

### Actions since September 2008

- Cllr Mike Biddle and Astons Coaches both made requests for Astons Coaches to be included in the 'Severn Card' Scheme – a multi operator student bus pass scheme. Whilst the pass was already valid on contracted services as part of the contract terms and conditions, it was not valid on commercial services as this involves reimbursement to the operator.
- Worcestershire County Council and Astons Coaches have since reached agreement on this matter and the 'Severn Card' is now valid on Astons' commercial Service 32.
- Cllr Bob Bullock forwarded representations from The Lawns Nursing Home and Kempsey Parish Council regarding the reduction in frequency. Effectively the service has reduced from a 30 minute frequency (pre-September 2008) to an hourly frequency, with the exception of peak times.
- Worcestershire County Council approached both First and Astons Coaches to explore options for providing a more frequent service to Kempsey again. Due to budgetary

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pressures, the County Council explained that a maximum of £10K could be offered in subsidy and requested that both operators submit any proposals for using the subsidy.

- After reviewing both proposals, the County Council has reached agreement with First to provide an additional 3 round trips between the City Centre and Kempsey/Baynhall.
- From 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008, First will operate additional trips to Kempsey/Baynhall at approximately :
  - Lunchtime.
  - 1515 departure from Kempsey to accommodate the shift changeover times at The Lawns Nursing Home – as requested by Cllr Bob Bullock.
  - 1630 hrs departure from the City Centre to suit student travel times.
- A full timetable will be issued in due course to provide complete details on journeys to the Kempsey area.
- This arrangement will continue until 4<sup>th</sup> September 2009 inclusive with the current funding agreement.

### **Future Plans**

Worcestershire County Council is currently undertaking a complete review of the Worcester City transport network in co-operation with commercial and contracted bus operators. The Council and our partners intend to consult stakeholders during late Spring 2009 on the future plans for the local bus network in Worcester City (of which Kempsey will be included) and this situation will be re-evaluated as part of the review process. It is intended that a completely revised network of services will be implemented in co-operation with operators from September 2009. We will also be considered integrated ticketing solutions as part of this review.

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