



## EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL



**TOWN COUNCIL meeting 14th NOVEMBER 2022 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall**

### **Item 12 – Town Plan Committee Recommendation: Bus Back Better**

The proposals in the attached report were discussed and supported at the Town Plan Committee meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October. The Town Plan Committee asks for the support of the Full Council.

**The council is asked to support the proposals in the Bus Back Better report.**

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## **Bus Back Better report**

### **1. New and restored bus services**

#### **(a) 53 Eckington – Defford – Pershore – Pinvin – Drakes Broughton (village) – Worcester**

This 0908 service was withdrawn at the very start of the Covid outbreak in March 2020 but provided an important and sorely missed daily bus link between these large villages – and Drakes Broughton village centre. The service should be restored at the earliest possible opportunity together with a return at 1250 from Worcester – an hour earlier than previous at the request of users – a move which was agreed with FMR but never implemented due to its sudden Covid withdrawal.

#### **(b) Village Hopper**

Restoration of the 53 service as above could permit withdrawal of the twice weekly services to Defford and Eckington from the Village Hopper timings and restoration of services from the Combertons and Elmley lost in that timetable redraft.

#### **(c) X50 Sunday service Pershore – Worcester**

This seemed to be introduced mainly to provide some sort of bus link using one bus/one driver for the new Parkway station on a Sunday, was cut back after a few months, does not start until 1000 and finishes by 1700. It has never been well used and appears under threat.

The subsidy provided by County for this service would be better invested in a Sunday link between Pershore Town and Pershore Station to link with hourly trains to Worcester and Evesham and/or extension of the X50 Saturday timetable to offer an earlier service in each direction in the morning (offering arrival in Worcester a full hour earlier than the present 1000 arrival) and by extending the Saturday service to run two hourly between Evesham and Worcester into the evening to meet the growing demand for leisure travel.

#### **(d) Evesham circular town link**

There appears a growing demand for an Evesham Town link bus along the lines of the Pershore PlumLine providing services for schools, shopping and leisure travel and connecting with longer distance buses at the town's bus station and trains at the rail station.

#### **(e) More services to the Valley?**

### **2. Bus travel infrastructure**

#### **(a) Improve safety and prominence at bus stops especially at Pershore and Drakes Broughton**

*The bus stop opposite the top of Pershore station drive is a dangerous location, not served by any pavement, and directly on a busy junction. This sees a lot of often heavy traffic to the trading estate and is only 50 yards from a humpback bridge with limited visibility for motorists and pedestrians. The bus stop flag is regularly hidden by a fast-growing hedge.*

*The bus stop flag could be relocated c. 50 yards south and established on a lamppost nearer the Walcot Lane turn and virtually opposite the stop on the other side which is served by a bus layby improving both safety and prominence.*

*Another dangerous location is in Drakes Broughton where the existing bus shelter on the Worcester side is near a sharp bend with limited visibility and often speeding traffic. Relocation of the stop and shelter c. 100 yards west, just past the Stonebow Road turn, would place it near a pedestrian crossing, closer to the school, new housing on the main road and housing in Stonebow Road.*

(b) Relocation of existing bus shelters made effectively redundant by service changes

*The shelter served by a layby on Pershore High Street opposite the Pickled Plum was formerly served hourly to Worcester and Evesham and is now only served by a limited Village Hopper service.*

*The shelter at Hurst Park, Station Road is also virtually redundant as services on the main road have almost ceased and the stop is not served by the Pershore PlumLine which uses the service road at the rear. In addition the Whitcroft Road bus shelter which was removed due to its proximity to the recently installed pedestrian crossing is awaiting refurbishment and relocation to a proposed site on Worcester Road on the main X50 route near to the Vineyards Estate and the Three Springs Road junction.*

(c) Restoration of the bus stops in the service road at Stoulton by Feli's Bar

*No buses currently serve this service road or the existing shelter. Diverting the X50 would bring the services nearer to existing housing and avoid local residents having to walk up to the main road stops. FMR have indicated that such a small diversion would not cause disruption to schedules.*

(d) Provision of a new covered bus shelter at the top of Pershore Station drive

*The above, on the wide strip of pavement by the existing bus layby, to cater for passengers arriving by train and awaiting bus transport into town. This needs to be coupled with improved signage both from the road and the station to increase prominence of bus stops and safety.*

### **3. Improving bus/rail interchange and connections.**

Rail services have improved in recent timetables to the extent that Evesham is now served by an hourly service throughout the day and half hourly at peak times. In addition the daytime services from London/Oxford and from Hereford/Worcester both arrive at Evesham at 35 minutes past the hour which should make bus rail co-ordination and integration easier. Services potentially involved are:

(a) **X18** Bidford and Stratford-upon-Avon

Operates hourly passing the top of the station drive where there is a bus shelter. As such connections are reasonable although could be improved. Suggest improving bus/rail opportunities that these services are extended from the bus station to Stratford railway station.

(b) **R4** Broadway

Limited service approx. two hourly from c. 0745 to 1600 but with an earlier finish on Saturdays, the main day for leisure travel. Suggest this service operates from Evesham Station drive, be upgraded to hourly and provide a new commuter link for Broadway as well as a leisure link for tourists and day trippers to this popular Cotswold destination.

## (c) 247 Evesham – Alcester – Redditch

Suggest that existing services be extended to run from the bus station to and from Evesham rail station to link with trains and provide a new rail-bus-rail link with Redditch bus station adjacent to the rail station offering services to Bournville, University and Birmingham New Street and on to Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield.

**Pershore Station**

## (d) 566 Pershore PlumLine services

Offers an approx. hourly service between Pinvin, Pershore Station and Town Centre as well as an hourly circular town route between 0800 and 1700 but interspersed with existing school services in the morning and afternoon.

Existing service could be improved to offer better bus/rail connections for Evesham, Oxford, and London. Earlier start up could be provided – the bus travels dead mileage from Worcester – and the town-station link improved following afternoon school services to cater better for train connections from 1600 to 1730.

## (e) Village Hopper

Service timings for this services offering a real lifeline to villages both north and south of Pershore could be amended to offer new rail connections or perhaps better still connect with X50 services at Pershore Broad Street to provide the opportunity for shopping trips into Worcester.

**5. Publicity and Promotion**

Essential for timetable publicity in information boards at bus stops to be updated or removed promptly when out of date.

*(Bus timetables at both stops in Shrubbery Road, Drakes Broughton show misleading information dating back to February 2019(!) and all but the schools' services were withdrawn in March 2020).*

Restoration of bus timetable leaflets for several routes which are popular with users yet have been withdrawn in favour merely of posting timetables on a website which is not easy to navigate. Many, mostly elderly users have no access to the internet.

Ensure with increasing leisure travel that bus (and rail) travel information is readily available at tourist information centres, libraries, and certain shops. Rail and Bus for Herefordshire provide a Rail/Bus Guide for Ledbury and this could be adopted for the Evesham/Pershore area potentially with advertising and/or a small cover charge for sale at various outlets.

Consideration of special promotions which have been sadly lacking in recent times to “get people back on the buses.” Senior bus passes offer free travel to the over 65's but more needs to be done to encourage young people back on the buses, e.g. by extending half fares to 16–18-year-olds on Saturdays – the main day for leisure travel.