

## **READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER 2023**

#### **COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1** in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor Singh to ask the Chair of Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### **Number 18 Bus Route**

Many people in Tilehurst have been requesting the restoration of bus route number 18 which travels via Kentwood Hill from Calcot Sainsbury's to Reading Hospital. Even if it is done once a week elderly people and families with small children will benefit immensely.

Reading Borough Council was provided with funding from Central Government totalling £26.6 million. Will the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport join me to make a case for the restoration of bus route number 18?

#### **REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:**

I invite Councillor Ennis, the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

#### **REPLY by the Councillor Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport:**

Reading Borough Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) includes funding to support the extension and enhancement of the current bus service BUZZ42, which runs from Kenavon Drive to Rivermead, via the town centre.

The Council is currently in the process of undertaking a procurement for the renewal of these services, within which an option has been included to extend BUZZ42 to Tilehurst Triangle via Cow Lane Bridge, Portman Road, Oxford Road and Kentwood Hill providing a link between Kentwood Hill and the Town Centre, whilst also providing additional connectivity to the new Rivermead leisure facilities as well as the new school being built on Richfield Avenue.

Subject to suitable bids being received and appropriate funding the Council hopes to replace BUZZ42 with Route 18/18a. Route 18 will provide services between Kenavon Drive and Tilehurst, whilst 18a would continue to operate the existing BUZZ42 services from Kenavon Drive to the town centre only. The short journeys will only operate Mon-Fri peaks with the bulk of the service being through trips between Kenavon Drive and Tilehurst.

Subject to the above, it is hoped that a new Route 18 service could commence from April 2024 and in advance of the new school's first intake in September 2024. However, should suitable bids not be received for the extended services, the existing BUZZ42 would be retained as this is funded by developer contributions.

With respect to connecting Tilehurst with Calcot this is currently served by regular Reading Buses Route 15 and for access to the RBH there are frequent buses on services 3,9,19 from Reading town centre.

**ENDS**