



Pathhead & District Community Association SCIO
The Community Hall
11 Main Street
Pathhead
EH37 5PZ
www.pathhead.info

Councilor Milligan,
Leader, Midlothian Council,
Midlothian House,
Buckleuch Street,
Dalkeith,
EH22 1DN

11th December 2017

Dear Councillor Milligan and The Members of Midlothian Council,

We note that Midlothian Council proposes to stop its subsidy of £18,000 to Borders Buses for the service 51/52 that serves the A68 through Pathhead. We understand from previous proposals and the response by the bus company at that time, that the 51/52 service may as a consequence be reduced or rerouted or may become more costly to use.

Following consultation of the membership organisations that form the Pathhead & District Community Association and the wider community, we must protest this proposal and ask the Council to reconsider.

The 51/52 service is the only bus to service the A68 through Midlothian and is already more infrequent and more costly than similar services to other parts of Midlothian. If this proposal was in put in place, the communities of Ford, Dewarton, Newlandrigg, Edgehead, Whitehill and various nearby smaller communities will lose their only bus service. Residents from Fala and Pathhead as well as those listed above will be unable to alight/board in Dalkeith or travel to those villages mentioned above.

It has become clear from our consultation that many residents rely on the bus service for access to hospitals, universities, colleges, shopping, post offices, sports facilities, places of worship and work places. It also potentially denies people access to shops in Dalkeith, forcing them to pay extra for deliveries, pay much higher prices or rely on the good will of neighbours to get food. Removing this service will have profound effects on the people who live along this route.

We note how the various councils of Midlothian, City of Edinburgh and East Lothian emphasise the need for us all to be environmentally aware. Indeed Edinburgh is becoming increasingly more congested and looks for people who travel there to use public transport. Implementation of this proposal would make a mockery of these collective aims.

Part of the role of the Community Association is to support the wellbeing of the residents. We have been told there are many people who are rely on this bus service to support their wellbeing, whether to attend hospital appointments or for just the simple act of meeting friends. We would ask if the Council has considered the additional cost to the NHS of supplying an ambulance service for those attending appointments. Much is made in the press of the need to improve the provision of services to support mental wellbeing and how better social integration plays a part in reducing the



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incidence of loneliness, depression etc. Removing this bus service can only work against efforts to improve peoples' wellbeing.

It is the request of the Community Association that that the current subsidy remains. In fact given our new understanding that it is such a small amount, we would actually like it increased so that the fares from Fala onwards are more comparable to those for example e.g. in Gorebridge. Alternatively Midlothian Council should be arguing for a Lothian bus service to best support the A68 residents.

Finally in asking for the Council to reconsider this, we should record that our consultation has noted a considerable level of concern around the lack of attention paid to this district by Midlothian Council. It has been noted by many that there is a disparity in services provided to Pathhead and the A68 corridor residents compared to say those provided to Gorebridge and the A7 corridor residents. The Community Association would like to work with the Council to see whether it, as a charity, could help provide some services impacted by cuts - e.g. as a location for a community library, but in turn The Association would ask Midlothian Council to better help it in supporting them.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Heydon-Dumbleton
Chairman, on behalf of The Pathhead & District Community Association.