

## Full Council

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>21 June 2016</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Bus Subsidy</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Graham Hunt, Town Clerk</b>

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide background on a proposal to provide a subsidy to allow the partial continuation of the 120/121/123/124 bus service.

### Background

2. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is withdrawing bus subsidies from 20 July 2016.
3. This had a potential impact on the 40, 120/121/123/124 and 280 services that service Thame.
4. The threats to the parts of the 280 and 40 services have been lifted through the relevant bus companies continuing the service without subsidy.
5. The biggest subsidy, and potential biggest impact is to the 6 day a week 120/121/123/124 service. The current timetable is attached. The operator has stated that the service will discontinue from 20 July 2016.
6. Cllr Mary Stiles has established that vulnerable users within Thame do use that service to get to and from the town centre. It also provides for people wanting to travel to Thame from outlying villages.
7. Over the months since the subsidy withdrawal was announced, Cllr Mary Stiles and officers have had wide ranging discussions with OCC, bus operators, bus users and adjoining parishes. Many potential solutions have been discussed.
8. It has now reached the point where there is greater (but still incomplete) clarity.
9. Feasibility and exact cost of providing a reduced service is still being established from the current operator.

### Proposal / Resource Appraisal

10. It is proposed that Thame Town Council, via Cllr Stiles / officers, takes the lead on trying to save at least part of the 120/121/123/124 service – probably the Tuesday market day service.
11. That will require the continuation of part of the subsidy to the operator, and Councillor / officer time to negotiate with the operator.
12. Exact amounts (and extent of contribution from other parishes) are still being established.
13. Expectation is that subsidy required may be up to £6,250 per annum.
14. Funds could be allocated half and half from the Localism Fund and General Reserves.

15. The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee, through its existing and proposed Working Groups will in due course consider bus transport further, so commitment should only be made for one year.

### **Risk Assessment**

16. No specific risks are identified.

**Legal Powers:** General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011

### **Recommendation that:**

- i) The Town Council delegates responsibility to Councillor Mary Stiles and Officers to spend up to £6,250 from the Localism Fund / General Reserves, with support from other parishes, to enable, if feasible, the partial continuation of the 120/121/123/124 bus service for up to a further year beyond 20 July 2016.***