



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
Member for the Highlands and Islands

Mr David Liston
Managing Director
Stagecoach North Scotland
Union Square Bus Station
Guild Street
Aberdeen
AB11 6NA

Our Ref: JH2672

26 June 2019

Dear Mr Liston,

Bus services in Forbeshill, Forres, Moray

I am writing following meetings I have held with residents in the Forbeshill area. Forbeshill is a sizeable residential area at the edge of Forres, and was formerly served by the Stagecoach Number 36 service that connected the community to Forres town centre. This was withdrawn around two years ago.

A number of residents expressed concerns about the absence of a bus connection into the centre of the town, particularly for older people and those who have limited mobility. Geographically, many parts of the Forbeshill estate are at the top of a steep hill, which can make walking – particularly with shopping – difficult. While the on-demand dial-a-bus service operated by Moray Council can provide some support, it can be problematic for those making short return trips or those who need to travel at short notice.

The Number 31 service runs nearby and would, as far as I can see, be relatively easy to divert into the Forbeshill area without any impact on other services and with only a small impact on journey times to and from its terminus at Findhorn. Even if occasional services could include the community, it would be a vast improvement on the current position.

I would therefore be grateful if you could advise me of the following—

1. What reasons Stagecoach has for not providing a service which includes Forbeshill.
2. What consideration was given to the impact of leaving Forbeshill residents without an easily accessible service.

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3. Since the withdrawal of the Number 36 service, what consideration you have given to the Number 31 including Forbeshill in its route.
4. If a full service to Forbeshill cannot be resumed, what consideration you have given to introducing a reduced service. For example, alternate buses including Forbeshill in their route.
5. With your consultation on new timetables ending in a few days, how you advertised or promoted that consultation – and the opportunity to respond to it – to bus users and the wider public in Moray.

I would hope that you would give serious consideration to returning a bus service to the area and the clear benefits it would have for the community in Forbeshill. I have copied this information to the Stagecoach North consultation e-mail address in relation to the Number 31 service and would appreciate if these positions are taken into account as part of that process as well.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Halcro Johnston'.

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament
Highlands and Islands Region