

# ***Action on Petitions***



**ACTION TAKEN ON PETITIONS**

Council Members are asked to note the action taken in relation to the under mentioned petition which was presented to Council by Councillor Gillian Galbraith on 24 June 2015: -

**(i) Petition requesting the reinstatement of bus service 35A between East Herrington and Silksworth.**

The text of the petition read:

*“The residents of Oakfield Court and the surrounding area are having difficulties in getting to Silksworth since Go North East have taken off the number 35A bus service and replaced it with the 35 which only runs once every hour.*

*This is causing hardship for especially the elderly residents who need to journey to Silksworth to access the Health Centre for Doctor’s appointments, also the Post Office.*

*For residents who live in parts of Farringdon the Gentoo office is also there.*

*They are aware that Nexus support an evening and weekend service 35A however this does not help with Doctor’s appointments.”*

The petition was forwarded to the bus operator Go North East and to Nexus for their response. Details of their deliberations and response are outlined below.

Go North East responded to Councillor Galbraith on 30 June 2015. In this they acknowledge that they made changes to services in Sunderland at the end of January. A review of the service 35A was instigated following feedback from passengers about the route being too complicated, and the actual changes which were introduced were done so after a thorough review of passenger numbers and travel patterns, a consultation event at Park Lane Interchange, and face to face surveys with passengers on board service 35A in the affected area.

Their analysis showed that the number of people travelling directly between The Herringtons and Silksworth was not sufficient for a 20-minute service to continue to operate. However, the connection is still available throughout the day with no change of buses required. Service 38 provides a direct connection to Silksworth hourly on Monday to Saturday daytimes, with service 35A continuing to provide the link on evenings and Sundays. It is also possible to make the journey on a more frequent basis with one change of bus, by using service 33/33A from Silksworth to Barnes Park, and then service 35/36 from Barnes Park to the Herringtons, with each of these services running up to every 15 minutes on Monday to Saturday daytimes.

They have no plans to increase the frequency of the connection between The Herringtons and Silksworth at the current time, however they state that they continually review all of their services to ensure that they meet the needs of passengers

Nexus wrote to Councillor Galbraith on 21 July with their response. This explained that as Go North East is a commercial operator, Nexus has very little control over the decisions made in relation to their commercial networks. Evening and Sunday journeys on the '35A' are financially supported by Nexus and continue to service Oakfield Court. Nexus also continue to provide an hourly daytime service for the residents of Oakfield Court in the form of the Nexus secured service '37'. This provides hourly links to Doxford Park, East Herrington and Washington Galleries. It also highlighted other services such as taxi-card and group travel which may assist residents.

The Nexus response mentions that they believed that the changes in January were done without the appropriate consultation and encouraged the petitioners to continue to continue Go North East.

The City Council does not have any legal or financial responsibility for bus services. The City Council's powers in this context are limited to influencing or lobbying the commercial operators and requesting Nexus to secure additional services to make good any gaps in the commercial network. In either instance the final decision on whether to reinstate the service will rest with the operator or Nexus.

In the case of this petition both avenues available to the City Council to resolving this matter have been exhausted and there is nothing further within the current legislative framework that can be done.

Councillor Gillian Galbraith and the petitioners have been notified.