

Ranil Jayawardena MP
Member of Parliament for North East Hampshire

Sent via Email only

Cllr Rob Humby
Vice Chairman Hampshire County Council
Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and
Environment

12th January 2022

Dear Sirs

No 7 Bus: Reading – Hartley Wintney – Fleet Station

Yet again as a community we have been 'sandbagged' by a late notification from Reading Buses of a material change in the service they will run wef 17th January - which was not advised directly to us but to which we were alerted by a resident. A belated notice can now be found on the bus company's [website](#).

As we understand it, there has been prior consultation with Hampshire County Council, Wokingham Borough Council and Reading Borough Council, as is required notice to the Traffic Commissioners. It does seem as though the company are using a number of Covid related challenges in a way which suits their corporate objectives rather than the social transport needs of communities along the bus route.

We are not impervious to the real economic challenges that declining passenger numbers cause both to the operator and the challenges, too, to County Council funding. It seems counter intuitive, however, that at a time when we should be getting people out of cars, the shrinking services cause the opposite. It should be noted, that as a Parish Council we have stepped up to fund through the precept our own Community Bus to cover gaps in previously funded services.

This is a distressing state of affairs and although we have to recognise the reality of the situation, it does seem that there is a systemic issue which needs to be addressed here.

With my regards,



Cllr Chris Farrance
Chairman, Hartley Wintney Parish Council