

Further detail on bus service for families who catch the 781 from Stocksbridge and Deepcar

As noted on our general update, no bus companies have yet come forward to offer a direct replacement for the 781 bus.

There has never been a contract for school bus services. Bright Bus have been a commercial operator, like any other bus company. Unfortunately, reductions in subsidies for these kinds of services have meant that companies that only run services to and from schools are not commercially viable.

This is why no companies have come forward to offer a direct replacement for the 781 service.

SYPTE have invited quotes from bus companies, asking them to say how much they would charge as an extra to the regular fares, to be able to run a replacement service. We will know early next week (week beginning 17th July) what response they have had.

They have put out tenders for two options. One would be a 50 seat bus, which would pick up along the 781 route between Stocksbridge and Wadsley only. The other is for a 70 seat bus which replace the 781 service directly, including pick up through Hillsborough.

I have noted from your responses to my letter last week that it feels unfair that you have additional barriers to be able to send your children to a Catholic school, when compared to families elsewhere in the city. **I fully understand your feelings and I have shared these with SYPTE and with the city council, asking that they will consider covering any additional cost, over and above bus fares, that is needed to keep this service.**

The majority of people who responded to my letter said that, if there was no alternative, they would consider contributing additional payment to keep a direct service to Deepcar and Stocksbridge. This is clearly a last option, but if we do not get a positive response from SYPTE and/or the council about covering the additional cost, then we will come back to explore this with you.

If we were in a situation where families were paying additional funds to ensure that there was a bus service, it would most likely to be operated on a bus pass basis. You would get a pass in return for the additional payments and only children with a pass would be able to use the bus. If we do end up in this position, you can rest assured that we will continue to push for support from the council and SYPTE.