



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Katy Clark MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

24th July 2023

Mr Duncan Cameron
Managing Director
First Bus
100 Cathcart Road
Glasgow
G42 7BH

Our Reference: FNB2-JR

Withdrawal of Night Bus Services

Dear Mr Cameron,

I am writing with deep concern regarding the announced withdrawal of night bus services from 20 August, which will affect constituents of mine who travel across Glasgow and surrounding areas from towns such as Balloch, Paisley, Clydebank and Newton Mearns.

You may recall that I wrote a similar letter to you indicating that constituents had been flagging their concerns to me last year about the withdrawal of some night services at weekends. Many of the points I raised in that letter are even more applicable given the severity of the ongoing cost of living crisis for ordinary people.

Regarding the service itself, I appreciate you will have financial constraints affecting some services, with patronage not returning to pre-pandemic levels. I noted First's analysis that some night buses are regularly operating with as few as 14 passengers per hour. However, these 14 are not just numbers but people who rely on the bus to get safely home in the early hours. Regardless, according to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's (SPT) framework, this level of demand still requires a subsidised service to continue, suggesting it is a fully viable route. This suggests that First are withdrawing the service for profitability reasons, which I believe is unacceptable given it is a vital public service.

I would also urge you to consider who will be most affected by the withdrawal of this service. Hospitality and events staff in particular rely on public transport to safely travel home after late shifts. There have been distressing stories across the country about workers, especially women, facing sexual harassment on their late trips home. Having spoken to many workers in these sectors, I am also aware that taxis are often inaccessible or, in some cases, unaffordable, costing two to three hours wages. There is also plenty of evidence to suggest the average night shift worker is also on the lower end of the income scale.

The withdrawal of this service is a dereliction of duty

I look forward to reading your response.



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Yours sincerely,

Katy Clark MSP
West Scotland Region