Briefing Note – Position Statement regarding Petition to Reinstate the No. 2 Bus Service to Pigeons Farm

Produced for:	Highways Improvement Group
Requested by:	Highways Improvement Group
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Service Director:	Jon Winstanley – Service Director Environment
Date Prepared:	21 September 2026
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1 Purpose of the Briefing

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the petition requesting that the recent changes to the No. 2 bus service be reversed and that the route be reinstated to its previous terminus at Pigeons Farm.

1.2 The briefing summarises the concerns raised by petitioners, the available patronage and performance data, the operational reasons for the service changes, and the options available to the Council.

2 Background

2.1 A petition containing 254 signatures was received on 20 July 2026 requesting that the No. 2 bus service be reinstated to its former route terminating at Pigeons Farm. Petitioners have expressed concerns that the revised route removes bus access from Monks Lane, reduces accessibility for residents of Wash Common and may adversely affect those who rely on public transport to access employment, education, healthcare, shopping and other essential services.

2.2 The changes to the local bus network were introduced on 2 August 2026 following a review of service reliability and punctuality. Prior to the changes, approximately 20% of journeys were operating late, with around one in five services failing to meet the Department for Transport's punctuality standard of operating within one minute early and five minutes late of the scheduled time. The revised network was designed to improve timetable resilience and operational performance across interconnected services.

2.3 The Department for Transport encourages timetable stability to provide certainty for passengers and recommends that timetable changes are limited to no more than two

planned change dates per year, except where operational circumstances require otherwise. This requirement forms part of the Enhanced Partnership Minimum Standards and must be adopted by March 2027.

2.4 Prior to the implementation of the revised network, ward Members were consulted on the proposed timetable and route changes. Feedback was sought by the Portfolio Holder, and responses were provided to questions raised. Following consideration of the proposals, the necessary approvals were obtained to vary the existing contract arrangements. Information regarding the changes was subsequently published through a range of channels including the Council's website, on-board notices and information displays at Newbury Library.

3 Current Status

3.1 Analysis of available passenger data indicates that Route 2 recorded 11,747 passenger boardings during the review period between May 2026 and mid-July 2026. Monks Lane-related stops accounted for 578 boardings, representing approximately 4.9% of total Route 2 patronage. Excluding Newbury College, the remaining Monks Lane stops accounted for 164 boardings, equivalent to approximately 1.4% of total route patronage.

3.2 The revised network remains in operation and has been formally registered with the Traffic Commissioner. Initial feedback indicates improvements to service reliability and timetable resilience. Further patronage and performance information covering September 2026 is expected in early October 2026 and will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of the changes.

3.3 Officers continue to monitor feedback from residents, Members and stakeholders. Further patronage and performance information covering September 2026 is expected in early October 2026 and will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the impact of the changes. Officers will also continue to consider the availability of alternative transport options, including Community Connect demand responsive transport services, community transport schemes and future opportunities arising from developer-funded public transport improvements associated with planned developments in South Newbury.

3.4 The route changes were developed through partnership working under the Council's Enhanced Partnership arrangements, which require the Council and bus operators to work collaboratively to improve bus service reliability, punctuality and overall network performance. The review concluded that changes to Route 2 were necessary to address reliability concerns that were affecting both Route 2 and other interconnected local bus services.

4 Implications and Impact

4.1 The petition demonstrates local concern regarding the changes to the No. 2 service. Whilst some residents have experienced reduced accessibility and less direct journeys, the available evidence indicates that the revised arrangements support wider network reliability objectives.

4.2 Officers recognise that some residents now need to make alternative travel arrangements for journeys previously undertaken directly on the No. 2 service.

However, a range of public transport options remain available. The introduction of additional evening and Sunday bus services earlier in September 2026 has further increased opportunities for residents of Wash Common to connect with Newbury town centre and the wider bus network. Residents may also access destinations such as Monks Lane, Tesco and the retail park through the Council's on-demand Community Connect service, which operates between the South Newbury zone and locations across Newbury and the Northwest Downlands area. The service enables passengers to book journeys in advance and provides a flexible transport option tailored to passenger demand. For residents with mobility needs, Community Minibus and Community Car Schemes are also available. Officers further note the Department for Transport's decision to extend free concessionary bus travel for eligible disabled pass holders at all times from April 2027, which may improve accessibility for some users of public transport.

4.3 Any decision to reinstate or amend the route would require further registration processes, timetable revisions, publicity updates and potential financial support. Alternative options, including redesigning Routes 2 and 8, introducing additional journeys or exploring Demand Responsive Transport solutions, would have operational and financial implications that require further assessment.

4.4 Historical punctuality data demonstrated that punctuality across the Newbury & District network had been below desired levels for a sustained period. The review identified that delays experienced on Route 2 had the potential to impact the operation of other services within the integrated network. The route amendments were therefore intended to improve reliability not only for Route 2 users but also for passengers travelling across the wider Newbury bus network.

4.5 Future decisions must balance passenger demand, service reliability, financial sustainability and accessibility considerations across the wider network. Officers also recognise that petition signatures may not necessarily represent current or regular users of the service and therefore decisions should continue to be informed by objective evidence and performance data.

5 Next Steps

5.1 Officers will undertake a full review of September 2026 patronage and performance data once received in early October 2026.

5.2 The concerns raised through the petition will be considered alongside passenger usage, reliability, operational performance and stakeholder feedback.

5.3 The feasibility and implications of the following options will be assessed:

- Retain the current Route 2 arrangements.
- Redesign Routes 2 and 8 as a combined clockwise and anticlockwise service.
- Introduce additional Route 2 journeys serving Monks Lane and Tesco.
- Explore Demand Responsive Transport solutions.

5.4 In addition, significant residential developments proposed within the South Newbury area are expected to provide developer-funded public transport contributions. These contributions are intended to support new or enhanced bus services serving the

developments and surrounding areas. As these schemes progress, there may be opportunities to review public transport provision within the wider South Newbury area, including consideration of demand and connectivity requirements along the Monks Lane corridor.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The petition highlights genuine concerns regarding the impact of the Route 2 service changes on residents of Wash Common. However, the route changes were introduced to address longstanding reliability and punctuality issues, and the revised network has only been operational since 2 August 2026. Available evidence suggests that usage of the Monks Lane section is comparatively low relative to overall Route 2 patronage.

6.2 Officers therefore consider that it would be premature to reverse the changes before a full assessment of operational and patronage data can be completed. The forthcoming review of September 2026 performance information will provide a robust evidence base to determine whether further amendments should be considered. Until then, continued monitoring and evaluation of the revised network is recommended.

6.3 The Council remains committed to improving public transport accessibility, reliability and value for money across West Berkshire, whilst continuing to review passenger demand and future opportunities for service enhancements as evidence becomes available.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Petition Information 2026-06 Reinstate the No. 2 Bus to its Full Route Terminating at Pigeons Farm

info@westberks.gov.uk **(01635) 42400**
Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD

Review ePetition

Title: Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm

Statement:

We, the undersigned, petition the Council to Reverse the changes to the No. 2 bus route, so that it terminates at Pigeon's farm, as it has done previously.

Justification:

The shortening of the No. 2 bus route will leave residents along Monk's lane without a bus service. It will also impact the mobility of wash common residents. Many residents use the service to access the retail park and Tesco's. Residents that are unable to drive due to age, disability, or income will be isolated from accessing vital services.
This change also stands in contrast to WBC's BSIP and LTP, with commitments to reduce car usage across the district.
There is a large demand for this bus service, with a weekly patronage of 6400. A drop in patronage will put further financial pressure on WBC (Show truncated justification text)

Submitted by: Sam Jones, 22 Bunkers Hill, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 6tf

Status: Completed

Date submitted: 20/07/2026

Possible actions:

- Edit ePetition
- Update the status of this ePetition
- Reject this ePetition
- Send email to originator
- Add internal note
- Administer ePetition signatures
- Administer paper petition signatures
- Send email to all signatories
- Hide notes

ePetition Admin: Your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm has now completed posted on Monday 31 August 2026

Your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm has now completed.

It has received 254 responses.

Click the link below to see your completed Online petition:

Your Online petition

Click the link below to send us a message:

Send a note

Regards

West Berkshire Council

ePetition Admin: The Online petition 'Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm' supporting responses threshold now met. posted on Friday 24 July 2026

The Online petition 'Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm' has now received 50 supporting responses from a total of 50 as follows:

Agree: 50 responses

Click the link below to send us a message:

http://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/mgEPetitionReview.aspx?id=150

Regards

West Berkshire Council

ePetition Admin: Your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm is now active posted on Tuesday 21 July 2026

Your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm is now active and will run from 20 Jul 2026 to 31 Aug 2026

Click the link below to view or sign your Online petition

View your ePetition

Regards
West Berkshire Council

ePetition Admin: Thank you for submitting your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm posted on Monday 20 July 2026

Thank you for submitting your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm.

A member of our team will review your request soon and either approve it or contact you to discuss it. You will be kept informed of progress by email.

You can see the current status of your Online petition or send us a message from the link below:

View your Online petition Reinstate the No. 2 bus to its full route terminating at Pigeon's farm

Regards

West Berkshire Council

Exit Submit