

Petitioner's statement to the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 16 September 2015

The petition now presented to KCC shows the frustration felt by both residents and traders of Canterbury alike.

We know now that the 2012 Westgate Towers Traffic Trial happened because Stagecoach Bus Company purchased buses not fit for purpose (they didn't fit through the Westgate Towers.)

The Leader of KCC stopped the trial and gave assurances that the road layout would return to how it was before the trial. This has happened but there is no bus service to the area.

Kent University has a financial but not an operational interest in the buses. KCC pays part of the cost of the service.

Many reasons have been given as to why the buses cannot return through the Westgate Towers.

**1. Damage to the Towers.**

The structural survey shows the only damage was to the South side and it is caused by rain damage.

**2. Stagecoach stated it was illegal for drivers to retract their wing mirrors.**

C and U regulation 33 (4) (e) states that mirrors HAVE TO BE retractable by the driver (copy of legislation available). Over the past few years Councillors in Canterbury have been asking KCC to provide legislation which states this is illegal, none has been forthcoming.

**3. Disabled access.**

Routemaster manufacturer a narrower and greener bus which complies with current legislation and is used by Stagecoach in other areas Stagecoach letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 to Cllr Northey states 100 people per hour were being dropped in St Dunstons St Peters Street, these people are now taken along London Road to Rheims Way to Whitefriars shopping Centre. By passing St Dunstons and St Peters Street. Passengers are unable to reach their desired destination.

Stagecoach are planning to provide two buses an hour to bring people to Station Road West for the Train station and North Lane. This is not acceptable. It is not commercially viable and may well be a short lived service.

Stagecoach have stated that the St Dunstons route through the Westgate Towers is a very lucrative route (see Local plan) and buses must return to this area.

The bus stop through the Westgate Towers remains there and needs buses for residents to get to Doctors surgeries and Kent and Canterbury Hospital, plus customers for the shops in St Peters Street and St Dunstons area.

## Appendix A

For the Cabinet member for Highways to say he has no influence is simply risible. He has massive power and should exercise it in the public interest. He who pays the piper should call the tune.

Sadly KCC payments on the freedom pass have created a monopoly which allows Stagecoach to tell KCC what to do. This entire business has been a web of misinformation.

This petition is to ask KCC to ensure Stagecoach run buses through the Westgate Towers or to get a bus company that will.