



MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

MEETING DATE Thursday, 9 July 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Julia Berry (Vice Chair in the Chair), Charlie Bromilow, Matthew Lynch, Mark Jarnell, June Molyneaux and Kim Snape

OFFICERS: Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Robert Finnamore, Margaret France, Mike Handley and John Walker

OTHER MEMBERS: None

15.26 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Public Transport Issues be confirmed as a correct record.

15.27 Declarations of Any Interest

No declarations of any interests were received.

15.28 Parish Council Consultation

The Group considered the responses from those parishes that had been received to date that included:

- Anderton Parish Council
- Adlington Town Council
- Astley Village Parish Council
- Brindle Parish Council
- Heath Charnock Parish Council

Some of the issues fed back to the group had already been raised with the providers but it was agreed that any additional concerns or suggestions would be raised with the relevant organisations and any responses fed back to the appropriate parish Councils. This would include any issues raised by those parishes that had yet to respond.

Many of the issues raised reinforced the groups view that much of the gap in provision concerned residents in the more rural areas of the borough and it was felt that a better

understanding of the whole picture from which services could be improved upon would be by facilitating regular dialogue between us, the County Council and the operators.

It was reported that at a recent Town Centre meeting, the manager of Stagecoach had offered to meet with the Council on a regular basis in an attempt to improve communications and forge more effective partnership working for the benefit of Chorley residents and Members felt that this offer should be pursued and could potentially be facilitated by through the Councils Neighbourhood Area Meetings.

Recommendations:

- 1. To write to Lancashire county Council and all relevant operators to raise any issues raised by the parishes that have not already been covered as part of this review.**
- 2. To meet with Stagecoach on a regular basis to develop better working relations and improve communications**

15.29 Communication

The Group had raised concerns about how travel information was communicated to residents across the borough, particularly regarding bus times since Lancashire County Council had taken the decision several years ago to switch off the electronic passenger information boards that were sited at the Chorley Interchange. Members felt that the level of information provided could be improved, especially considering the absence of key information no longer being displayed at the individual bus stops and shelters. This included consideration of an adequate period of notice to passengers about increased fares.

It was also noted that some of the bus shelters were used by local companies for advertisement purpose and the Group felt that this service should offer the provision of the relevant bus time information being displayed.

In response to concerns from residents Lancashire County Council had taken the decision to improve information at the Interchange for passengers in Chorley with the help of operators Eric Wright Group. The County Council took the opportunity to extend opening hours of the information desk when completing a new contract for running the facility. The new service is now manned by staff providing greater continuity and better value for money. The opening hours have been extended from 5am to midnight providing greater accessibility for passengers. A plethora of bus timetables are available for passengers to take away and travel information is displayed at each of the stands within the Interchange as well as an overview of which bus services each area of the borough.

A wealth of other information about public transport is available on Lancashire County Council's website that includes how to apply for concessional travel, arrange community transport services and how to obtain bus information via a text, apps and mobile service.

Although the Group welcomed the improvements that had been made by the County Council, they still felt that more could be done and following a recent offer by Stagecoach, members sought to pursue the establishment of a regular dialogue

between the company and Borough and County Councils to develop a consistent approach to the regular review of services to ensure that they met demand.

On a positive note, Members noted the use of social media by the operators regarding changes to bus services was excellent and felt that this way of communicating could be replicated through other channels of communications to keep passengers better informed of changes to the service.

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Recommendations:

- 1. That Lancashire County Council re-considers the displaying of bus timetables at bus stops and shelters across the borough and explores the possibilities of funding this service by the use of advertising by local companies.**
- 2. That Lancashire County Council explores better ways of communicating increased bus fares to its customers, to include better use of social media and a longer period of notice communicated on the buses.**

15.30 Draft Final Report of the Public Transport Issues in Chorley Review

The Group considered a draft Final Report summarising their findings to date and agreed a number of recommendations that had been identified throughout the review of public transport issues in Chorley.

Following the groups discussions on the consultation with parish councils and communications information at this meeting, the group had a number of additional suggestions that would be added to the report that would see a total of 15

recommendations aimed at improving the public transport services being presented to the Executive Cabinets of both Chorley and Lancashire County Council for consideration.

Councillor Julia Berry who was acting as Chair for the meeting concluded that good public transport links are extremely important for both residents of the borough and visitors to Chorley. Public transport is a vital component of the town economic growth as evidenced by the Greater Manchester Transport Authority and the Group felt strongly that the introduction of similar governance arrangements for a Lancashire Combined Authority would benefit Chorley by enabling the Council to have a greater influence over the bus network and its performance. This would be the last meeting of the Group and Councillor Berry thanked the officers and members for their contribution to the review.

Recommendation:

- 1. To highlight to the Executive Cabinet the importance of considering all public transport needs for its residents when undertaking all relevant Council projects, for example, the provision of bicycle racks and storage units and positioning of bus stops as part of the Market Walk development proposals.**
- 2. That the final report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group on the Public Transport Issues review would be completed to include the additional recommendations agreed at this meeting and submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2015.**

15.31 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED - That press and public be excluded for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15.32 Letter from Network Rail

The Group considered the response that had been received from Network Rail regarding the request for a train station to be sited at Coppull. The prospects of developing a Station on the West Coast Main Line at Coppull remained low, however, Network Rail were still happy to continue supporting the work of both the County and the Borough Councils to progress the case in the future.

Network Rail is currently facilitating a West Coast Strategic Studies (WCSS) workstream on behalf of the industry to understand longer term requirements for the network, particularly taking account of High Speed 2 and growth in other rail sectors. Upon completion of the West Coast Strategic Studies process (expected completion date is April 2016) it is thought that the industry will have a much better understanding of the longer term outlook and possible requirements and that once that stage is reached, the consideration of a station at Coppull will be better informed and should also provide the opportunity to explore efficiencies for scheme development.

The Group felt that the Council needed to keep up the pressure on the company by seeking to obtain regular updates on the issue and continuing to lobby them and the County Council.

Recommendation:

That upon completion of the West Coast Strategic Studies process (expected April 2016) the Council will seek an update from and continue to lobby Lancashire County Council and Network Rail on the establishment of a railway station at Coppull.

Chair

Date