

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 7 October 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Robert Fynamore (Chair), Councillor Julia Berry (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Margaret France, Mike Handley, Matthew Lynch, Mark Jarnell, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood, Kim Snape and John Walker

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Charlie Bromilow

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor John Fillis (Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport (Lancashire County Council)) and Tony Moreton (Lancashire County Council)

14.PT.1 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

14.PT.2 Public Transport - Current Arrangements

County Councillor John Fillis, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Tony Moreton, Assistant Director of Sustainable Transport for Lancashire County Council attended the meeting to give the Group an overview of the following:

- Current service provision across the borough
- Proposed changes to services, following recent consultation
- The difficulties regarding provision of services in rural area
- Community Travel (issues with volunteering)

Current bus service provision across the borough consists of a mixture of commercial and subsidised routes. Commercial routes (80%) are those operated for profit and include:

No:	Route:	Frequency:
	Network Chorley Services to Chorley estates, Coppull, Astley Village, Great Knowley, Eaves Lane, Heath Charnock, Adlington, Charnock Richard and Croston	
24	Chorley – Blackburn	Every 30 minutes

109	Chorley – Buckshaw – Preston	4 an hour
115	Chorley – Preston via Moss Side	Hourly
119	Chorley – Chorley Hospital – Euxton – Runshaw – Leyland	Hourly
125	Preston – Chorley – Bolton	Every 10 minutes
362	Chorley – Wigan	Every 15 minutes

There are three main bus operators in Chorley, Stage Coach, Arriva and Transdev that provide their services on a number of bus routes in and around Chorley.

Subsidised routes (20%) are provided by Lancashire County Council and they currently spend around £800,000 per annum to provide this service for the residents of Chorley. 20 services are provided that are a mixture of daytime, evening and rural including:

No:	Route:	Service:
	Contribution to Network Chorley Services (75k)	
14	Chorley - Buckshaw	Daytime
110	Preston - Croston	Daytime
118	Leyland – Clayton Brook - Blackburn	Daytime:
337/347	Chorley – Eccleston – Mawdesley – Ormskirk/Southport	Daytime:
342	Diversion via Coppull Old Parish	
113	Preston – Wigan, Chorley Town Services	Evening
24	Chorley - Blackburn	Evening
109	Chorley - Preston	Evening
109	Chorley – Preston (Network Chorley)	Sunday

County Councillor Fillis talked to the Group about the proposed changes to the service. Following recent announcements by the government over future funding, the County Council now needed to find a further estimated savings of £300m between 2014 and 2018. This meant that they needed to undertake a Network review of all the current bus services. The review was expected to take around 18 months to complete and Chorley, South Ribble and Preston would be combined into one area in line with the bus routes offered by the commercial bus companies. The review is in its early stages.

It was explained that they spent approximately £7m per year subsidising local bus services and that the current assessment of contracts is based on a financial criteria where 40% of the cost of operation should be met through passenger revenue. This way of ranking could result in those contracts that underperform financially being more likely to be withdrawn irrespective of the community needs that they fulfil.

To take into account the priorities set out in the Local Transport Plan, the county council was proposing to revise the criteria to measure services in a more sustainable way. Each subsidised local bus service will be scored in relation to the purpose of the journey and how accessible it is to the local community. The County Council had undertaken consultation on this new scoring criteria that focussed on a much wider assessment for the service that included:

- Serving people who travelled for either employment, shopping, education, leisure or a mix
- Priority neighbourhoods
- Accessibility
- Older/disabled people etc...

This new criteria would be used to score each contract to decide what the network would look like and would be the definition of a cost effective and affordable level of service. Discussions were also taking place with the bus operators to ascertain if improvements could be made to the commercial service provision.

Members asked if the bus service information could be improved upon, particularly at the Chorley Interchange and were informed that discussions were taking place to improve upon the current arrangements.

In response to feedback received on the recent subsidised services consultation the County Council are working on a Parish Partnership offer that would provide a tailored bus service for individual areas across Lancashire based upon the needs of those communities that use it. The County Council would purchase and maintain a fleet of 16 seater buses that would be used to provide bus routes across the borough on routes that the commercial operators don't cover. The proposal is in its early infancy and County welcomed any views that the Group may have. Once the details were finalised they would be consulting widely on the proposals.

The group also discussed the issues that residents faced when travelling by train that train that included the re-opening of some stations and the reduced services at others and asked if the County Council could influence change in this service industry. It was explained that this was an area that the County Council had little or no power to influence on.

The Rail North – Department of Transport Partnership would be the only way in which any influence regarding train services in the North could be achieved. Recent consultation undertaken by the Department for Transport and Rail North, on the Northern and Transpennine Express franchise looked at how their plans for infrastructure improvements, such as electrification and the completion of Northern Hub schemes, would impact on services, frequencies and destinations. Questions were also asked how they should tackle crowding, meet future passenger demand, deliver a more efficient network, and improve customer services and passenger satisfaction.

The Chair thanked County Councillor John Fillis and Tony Moreton for attending the meeting.

Members of the group had a general discussion about all the issues their constituents had brought to their attention over the years. The overall aim of the Group is for the provision of reliable services that cover the whole of Chorley, reflective of people needs and the Group discussed what aspects of the issues that they would like to try to influence/improve upon.

It was AGREED that the scoping document would be drawn up in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair and brought back to the next meeting for approval by the Group.