

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 4 November 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Robert Finnamore (Chair), Councillor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Margaret France, Mike Handley, Matthew Lynch, Mark Jarnell, June Molyneaux, 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 Julia Berry

14.PT.3 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of any interests.

14.PT.4 Minutes

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Public Transport Issues meeting held on 7 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

14.PT.5 Scoping of the Review

The Group considered the draft scoping of the review that had been drafted following the discussions that took place at the last meeting.

The Group accepted that a review of the issues relating to all public transport would be too much to take on in the amount of time remaining and agreed to narrow the scope by investigating how the Council could influence improved bus transport services for its residents.

The Council would however continue to lobby Network Rail regarding individual rail issues by correspondence and seek to recommend an annual Three Tier Forum meeting being held, dedicated to transport related issues.

Members were keen to make sure that the current level of bus services were protected and where possible, improved upon, especially in the provision of sustainable community services to the elderly, isolated and often vulnerable members of our community.

The Group also discussed recent news relating to the introduction of Oyster Cards for Manchester as it was thought that this would potentially impact on bus travel in Chorley. The Oyster Card is a pre-paid card that can be used across all transport services and is more cost effective for the operators as they are purchased online or in one central place rather than on the individual mode of transport. This could be an issue that Lancashire County Council needed to explore further so as to understand the impact this decision may have.

RESOLVED – That subject to some minor changes to the wording of the objectives, the scoping of the review be agreed and taken to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

14.PT.6 Lancashire County Council's Subsidised Bus Service Criteria

The Group considered the new criteria for subsidised bus services which Lancashire County Council had recently consulted upon as part of a bus service network review

The key priority for Lancashire County Council's bus services will be to consider the principal purpose of the bus service and how it is used. A score will be allocated (up to a maximum of 10) based on whether services provide access for employment (5), followed by education (4), health/medical/welfare (4), shopping (2), personal business and leisure (1).

Members were concerned about the scoring system that had been proposed for the Operational Services Days. The reduced scores for daytime services on Sunday and evening services does not help with social isolation issues.

There was also a view that there could be changes to the frequency of some services on Monday to Saturday that could potentially free up some of the costs that could then be used to provide extra services on Sunday and in the evenings and the Group would like to ask County to look in to this before any decision is made.

With regards to the Accessibility objective Members had concerns about some of the travel choices that were offered as an alternative.

The bus companies were sometimes using transport that was too large for what was actually required and Members were keen to find out if all routes were assessed by need before the decision was taken on which size of vehicle to use.

The Task Group discussed a number of issues that posed several questions that they wished to ask of Lancashire County Council that included:

- If Tesco made a contribution to help fund the bus service to their store.
- Which routes are serviced by the Chorley Network buses and which ones are intended to be removed?
- Does the County Council receive a ring-fenced budget as the Transport Authority for Lancashire from Central Government and if so, where is this money spent and what portion if any relates to provision of transport in Chorley

It is the Council's understanding that the bus services contracts would soon be coming to an end, around the end of March and that the reviewed subsidised bus services would need to be in place by April. With this in mind it was AGREED to feedback the Group's views straight away so that their concerns could be taken into account before the contracts were finalised.

14.PT.7 **Next steps**

The Group discussed what steps would be taken over the next few months that included:

- Researching community travel schemes that were similar to the proposed Parish Partnership idea that had been mentioned by Lancashire County Council. This would be achieved by interviewing representatives from a Council that has undertaken a similar proposal.
- Influencing the Parish Partnership model before the actual format is decided upon, by finding out what the parishes actually want and identifying any gaps in need.
- Speaking to representatives from organisations such as Dial a ride and the Chorley and South Ribble Disability Forum
- Evaluating how and what information is currently provided about services and how these can be improved upon.

It was AGREED to invite representatives of a similar community travel scheme to the next meeting of the Group on 8 December 2014.

Chair

Date