

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Sustainable Public Transport**

Meeting date **Thursday, 4 February 2021**

Members present: Councillor Kim Snape (Chair), and Councillors Julia Berry, Mark Clifford, Gordon France, Tom Gray, Yvonne Hargreaves, Laura Lennox and June Molyneaux

Officers: Chris Sinnott (Deputy Chief Executive), Jonathan Noad (Director of Development and Place), Alison Marland (Principal Planning Officer) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

20.OS5 Minutes of meeting Friday, 29 January 2021 of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Sustainable Public Transport

Minutes of the meeting Friday 29 January 2021 to be considered at the next Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Sustainable Public Transport taking place 18 February 2021.

20.OS6 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations.

20.OS7 Question and Answer with Chorley Council's Chris Sinnott, Deputy Chief Executive and Jonathan Noad, Director of Development and Place

The Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Sustainable Public Transport welcomed Chris Sinnott, Deputy Chief Executive and Jonathan Noad, Director of Development and Place.

Members asked *“What incentive measures could be suggested to make sure Chorley’s fleet of licensed taxis quickly move onto clean zero carbon emitting models.”*

It was said that the process was not simple nor straight forward, but progress was being made, but with Jonathan Noad’s recent appointment, it would take time for matters to come to fruition.

Directives about green, efficient, electric vehicles and taxi’s changes were coming from Central Government, and the Council were in the process of updating the policies to ensure that they aligned.

A new Climate Change Working Group had been formed and this issue will feature on the agenda. It was understood that without careful consideration and cooperation, there would be push back from the trade due to the substantial costs involved.

Councillor Clifford returned and asked what more could be done to incentivise, encourage and promote the take up of electric and greener vehicles over carbon fueled vehicles.

Chris Sinnott explained that the Council had explored if it was possible to create a separate license for those with green vehicles, but the legislation was not in place.

Members asked if there was anything that Chorley could do to persuade or influence the County Council for a public transport service to cover the east to the west of Chorley, as the Task Group heard from Stagecoach that they do not want to deviate their service.

Chris Sinnott explained that they had been engaged with the County Council and Chorley Council continued to prevent gaps in the service with subsidies where necessary but the County Council were not interested in what Chorley had to say but were happy to take the money to fund the services. He added that the influence Chorley had was with the Local Plan, but the influence was limited against the Transport Operators or Transport Authority. In collaboration with West Lancashire and South Ribble a transport study was commissioned to form an evidence case which would be used in negotiations and discussions. Overall, Chorley agreed with what the County Council had done but it was the nuances that were often overlooked, with an example being the lack of a route from the east to the west of Chorley.

It was enquired if the cost for electric taxis were higher than carbon vehicles, as Stagecoach highlighted that a diesel bus that would last 15 years cost £250,000, an electric bus cost £400,000 and a hydrogen bus £500,000.

Chris Sinnott summarised that at present, electric was more expensive, but technology was evolving, charging points were becoming more common and faster, the capable range of electric vehicles were increasing, and price was decreasing.

The Task Group asked if there was the opportunity with the delayed County Council's Transport Plan to have fresh conversations about funding, investment, incentives, and tangible actions to be taken in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chris felt that there had to be the right balance, Chorley should continue to lobby, persuade, and build relationships with the County Council. But focus was needed on realistic outcomes, Chorley was not a Transport or Highways authority, but a community leader.

When asked about the timescales of adopting of cleaner vehicles and if there was a preference for either electric or hydrogen Chris felt that arbitrary timescales could undermine potential achievement. The Council did not have a position of preference as there were pros and cons of each source, the view of the Council is to have an efficient fleet of low emission vehicles.

Councillor Molyneaux asked if the planning process could be used to influence developers to think more about sustainable transport as sustainable transport rather than marketing. She gave the example in Adlington as a development was advertised

to have good transport links by bus with three a day, but failed to mention that they were not on the bus route, and it was not disclosed that the trains were infrequent.

Jonathan Noad felt that it was crucial for planning to have strong policies that could be used to set the standard going forward. There was an opportunity with the new local plan to strengthen policies and incorporate sustainable transport such as electric charging. Councillor Molyneaux felt it to be unusual that the social housing of which the tenants would be unable to afford an electric vehicle had electric charging points, yet the big 4 or 5 bedroom houses did not. Chris agreed and explained that the national policy plan was currently playing catch up.

Members asked if the Council could use a Section 106 agreement on new development stating that they must fund a bus route and added if the Council had given any consideration to operating its own small bus company.

Consideration had been given, but it was a difficult market to enter in terms of cost and the Council would not be able to support its operation. It was possible for a Section 106 to subsidise a bus route, but there would be considerable issues that could come from this. The route itself would need to be sustainable and successful otherwise the route would likely be discontinued after the funding was exhausted.

Relating to a question about additional funding for community travel to assist the most vulnerable residents, Chris Sinnott explained that it was a question that could be further elaborated on by the Communities Team, but he noted Central Lancs Dial-a-ride was funded by both the County Council and Chorley Council, although the levels of funding had been decreased.

The Chair asked if the Council could be doing more to use the rail stations to support the local economy and get more people into Chorley as some residents preferred going to other towns to shop.

Chris highlighted that there was Check Out Chorley and Choose Chorley, and these were at high footfall stations.

Members asked if there was consideration to add elements of gamification, for instance, the use of apps to encourage younger people to use public transport. Alison Marland, Principal Planning Officer explained that there were benefits to promoting the use of apps for information and ticketing and noted that an invitation was sent to Arriva Click to speak, as they were a provider of on demand transport.

20.OS8 Date of Next Meeting

18 February, 2021, 17:00

Chair

Date