

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

Meeting date **Thursday, 18 February 2021**

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

Officers: Alison Marland (Principal Planning Officer) and Matthew Pawlyszyn (Democratic and Members Services Officer)

21.OS9 Minutes of meeting Friday, 29 January 2021 of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Sustainable Public Transport

Decision: The minutes of the meeting Friday, 29 January 2021 of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Sustainable Transport were approved as a correct record.

21.OS10 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 4 February 2021 of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Sustainable Public Transport

Decision: The minutes of the meeting Thursday, 4 February 2021 of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Sustainable Transport were approved as a correct record.

21.OS11 Declarations of any Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21.OS12 Draft Final Report

Alison Marland, Principal Planning Officer presented the report.

Members raised that for the first two recommendations, it needed to be clear that the Council did not wish to just lobby the County Council, but to also engage with, open a dialogue and attempt to influence the appropriate bodies to enhance services. It was desired for County Councillors to meet regularly with transport officers and report back. It was also hoped that transport companies, particularly bus companies met with the Council prior to changes being made to allow a proactive rather than a reactive response. If this process was in place and changes could not be prevented, an opportunity to inform those affected would be presented.

The Chair added that the services needed to be promoted to residents as if they were not used, they were at risk of being lost.

Relating to recommendations 3 and 4, it was raised by Alison that there was an attempt underway to find a named person to contact at Lancashire County Council.

Members believed that the recommendation should add “routinely” to ensure consistent communication.

For recommendations 5, 6, 7 and 8. Councillors wished to have a recommendation ensuring that Planning considered bus routes in new developments. Alison was happy to include the recommendation but added that the Climate Change Working Group would cover the green agenda, planning policy relating to the local plan, and she did not want to duplicate work. A suggested recommendation was for the Climate Change Working Group to investigate it further. Members also wished to stop developers from misrepresenting their developments with bus stops that were not on an active route.

Members wished to reword recommendation 5 to remove the phrase “to consider the possibility of”.

Members wished to strengthen recommendation 7 and said that Stagecoach had previously indicated that they were not interested in new routes and would only alter routes if it was financially beneficial. It was hoped that the Council could recommend potentially viable routes to act proactively. It was acknowledged that Stagecoach was not the only operator in the area and with further cooperation and dialogue viable routes could be implemented.

For recommendations 12 A,B,C and D Members wanted to set challenges and demonstrate aspiration and felt that to tackle social isolation, equity needed to be provided and a 20 minute rule implemented to ensure that every citizen was able to access some form of public transport within 20 minutes. It was decided that it would not be a recommendation, but to feature in the body of the report, linked to mobility and accessibility.

It was questioned if social isolation had increased for villagers and those in rural areas due to the deregulation of the buses and it was believed that Ministers, the Member of Parliament for Chorley and the Government should be lobbied to re-regulate the buses.

Members did not foresee Lancashire County Council taking any action when bus companies were liquidated and the example given was the 119 route, there was little to no communication with the residents when the company running the route went into liquidation and when it was reinstated with a changed route. A dialogue was a necessity between the public transport companies, the County Council, and the District, Town and Parish Councils.

The Task Group agreed that they wanted to support Dial-a-Ride and other community transport operations financially, and to promote their visibility to ensure the most vulnerable member of society were able to complete their daily tasks particularly during the pandemic to reach appointments and vaccinations. Alison shared that there were schemes promoted by Lancashire County Council such as Shared Wheels and that allowed commuters to share lifts to and from their place of work.

It was noted that a retirement home in Clayton Brook was a regular user of Dial-a-Ride, but their use decreased due to the cost and convenience of sharing taxis.

For recommendation 13, clarity was sought as to the meaning of “car club”, and it was questioned if car clubs would work as they were most successful in areas with strong public transport infrastructure.

The Task Group thought that the information about funding for the County Council appeared to be an apology for the County Council and it was believed that the County Council needed to conduct scrutiny related to transport. East and West Lancashire have been in receipt of funding and pilot studies whereas Chorley had not received similar opportunities. The Task Group believed that a recommendation should be for the County Council to have a Public Transport Task Group that was transparent, and evidence based.

Members also raised that they would like to push for an oyster style card for the region.

Recommendation 14 covered accessibility related to operators, transport, bus, rail and also covered mobility scooters.

Members wished to include cycling and potentially recommend a further Task Group in the future. Members discussed cycle paths, towpaths and the role of the local plan and CIL infrastructure.

Members felt that more information from the interview with Sir Lindsay Hoyle needed to be included in the report including aspects of further devolution for transport for further control, either with local Councils or a North West travel Area. His views about fighting and lobbying for more regulation for buses should be within the report.

Members were informed that they would receive an updated final draft report for additional comments and amendments the week commencing 22 February.

Chair

Date