

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 5
18 NOVEMBER 2013	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

Contact Officer(s) Mark Speed

Contact Details mark.speed@peterborough.gov.uk (01733) 317471

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report has been requested by the Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities and outlines the passenger transport arrangements for the rural areas in Peterborough following the changes implemented on 1 October 2013 including any to the Call Connect service.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Commission is asked to note the content of the report and make comments and observations they may have to the officer who will attend the meeting of the Commission on 19 November 2013.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 Passenger transport services contribute to three of the priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategy:
- Creating opportunities – tackling inequalities by improving access to health, skills, education as well as supporting vulnerable people
 - Creating the UK's environment capital by making Peterborough cleaner and greener as well as increasing the use of sustainable transport
 - Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth by improving sustainable neighbourhood centres, increasing economic prosperity, building the sustainable infrastructure of the future and creating better places to live.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The majority of bus services in the rural area were run on a commercial basis and therefore were not part of the changes to service that occurred on 1 October 2013 as a result of changes to the passenger transport subsidised services budget. This is because commercially run services receive no subsidy from the council.

- 4.2 The services that were subsidised by the Council up to 30 September 2013 and were part of the service review were as follows:

- Local Link (all services)
- Stagecoach Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)
- Citi evening services from 20.30 Monday – Saturday and from 17.30 Sundays and Bank Holidays
- Some daytime services on route 24
- Sunday services on route 37
- Demand Responsive Services (Community Link, Rural Dial a Ride, Call Connect, Royal Voluntary Service)
- Luxecabs 342 (all services)

- Kimes 9 (some daytime services)

4.3 The contracts for the Local Link services were due to end on the 31st of March 2013, however they were extended to 30 September 2013 to allow a service review, (including equality impact assessments) to be undertaken to assess the best way forward with regards to changing the passenger transport subsidised services to meet the budgetary requirements.

4.4 A budget reduction for passenger transport subsidised services from £1.1m to £600k was agreed at Full Council in March 2013.

4.5 An independent assessment and subsequent discussions with the previous service provider of the Local Link services lead to the understanding that the cost to maintain those services could increase by up to £800,000. Overall this means that it would have cost approximately £1.9m to subsidise all of the services outlined in section 4.2 of this report. A saving of £1.3m, in real terms, was therefore required to meet the budget for passenger transport subsidised services as set by the Full Council in March 2013.

5 Changes to subsidised bus services 1 October 2013

5.1 The majority of bus services in the rural area are run commercially and receive no subsidy from the council and these services were unaffected by the service review and subsequent changes that occurred on the 1st of October 2013.

5.2 There are currently three types of passenger transport services that operate in the rural areas of Peterborough:

- Timetabled bus services
- Call Connect, a dial-a-bus service that is available to residents in the rural north west
- Rural dial-a-ride which operates in the whole of the rural area and is for anyone who is unable to access public transport (e.g. due to a disability)

5.3 As a result of the service review the following subsidises were withdrawn for services that operated in the rural areas of Peterborough:

- Some journeys on the Kimes 9
- Some journeys on Stagecoach 37 service on a Sunday
- Luxecabs 342
- All Local Link services

The result of the changes are outlined in the next section of this report. The services that have been subsidised means that everywhere in the city has access to either a demand responsive service which you have to ring up and book or a timetabled service.

5.4 Stagecoach 37 and Kimes 9

The Stagecoach 37 and Kimes 9 services are currently running the same services as before the subsidy was withdrawn.

5.5 Local Link and Luxecabs 342

All Local Link routes ceased to operate on 1 October 2013. This included the Local Link 401, 401A, 404, 410 and 413 which used to operate in the rural area.

The Luxecabs 342 service ceased operating on 1 October 2013. The 342 only operated once a week in Thorney and those residents continue to have both alternative timetabled and demand responsive services available to them.

There are no other reductions in rural services at this time.

5.6 Demand Responsive Services in Rural Areas

As a result of the review, subsidies for demand responsive services operating in the rural areas of Peterborough unchanged: Therefore the Call Connect and the Rural Dial-a-Ride service currently operates the same service provision as before the changes on 1 October 2013.

As a result of public feedback additional Call Connect services will be available to the public on the first four Sundays in December 2013 as a "one-off" service enhancement (the service will continue to operate as it always has throughout December on Mondays to Saturdays).

Officers are however monitoring the situation carefully including the demand for these services. Officers are also in discussions with the providers of our demand responsive services to find ways of increasing the service provision, if necessary, without increasing the revenue subsidy from the Council. At present we are unaware of any situation where the public are unable to access key services within Peterborough as a result of the changes carried out at the beginning of October.

5.7 New service: Stagecoach 22

The Local Link services ceased operating on 30 September 2013. Three new services were introduced on 1 October 2013 and one of these services, the Stagecoach 22, serves the following rural areas:

1. Ashton
2. Maxey
3. Etton
4. Glinton
5. Peakirk
6. Milking Nook
7. Newborough

Table 1 below shows the public transport services available to the different rural areas of Peterborough. For the vast majority of residents a timetabled service is available although the reduction in funding means that in some areas there is a reduced service with fewer journey times available to the public. However, most have at least one or two buses in and out of their area a day.

There are however four villages, Ufford, Wothorpe, Thornhaugh and Marholm that do not have a timetabled service. Residents in these villages are able to access the Call Connect service or the Rural Dial-a-Ride demand responsive services. It is worth noting that the Call Connect service does allow passengers to book journeys which will take them into the city centre, to the City Hospital and to adjacent villages.

Table 1 Timetabled Bus Services in Rural Areas of Peterborough

Ailsworth	Call Connect Kimes 9: An hourly service
Ashton	Call Connect Stagecoach 22: 2 journeys per day
Bainton	Call Connect Delaine 201: An hourly service
Barnack	Call Connect Delaine 201: An hourly service
Burghley	Call Connect Delaine 201: An hourly service
Castor	Call Connect Kimes 9: An hourly service
Deeping Gate	Call Connect Delaine 101/102: 20 minute service
Etton	Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day
Eye	Stagecoach 36: An hourly service Stagecoach 37: An hourly service Stagecoach 38: 1 return journey for AMVC pupils
Glington	Delaine 201: An hourly service Delaine 101/102: 20 minute service Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day Stagecoach 38: 1 return journey for AMVC pupils Kimes 71: 1 return journey for AMVC pupils
Helpston	Call Connect Delaine 201: An hourly service
Marholm	Call Connect
Maxey	Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day
Milking Nook	Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day
Newborough	Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day
Northborough	Delaine 101/102: 20 minute service
Peakirk	Stagecoach 22: 9 journeys per day
Pilsgate	Call Connect Delaine 201: An hourly service
Thornhaugh	Call Connect
Thorney	Stagecoach 36: An hourly service First X1: A half hourly service
Ufford	Call Connect
Wansford	Call Connect Kimes 9: An hourly service
Wittering	Call Connect Kimes 9: An hourly service
Wothorpe	Call Connect

(please note this table omits irregular services, urban services and out of area services)

6 KEY ISSUES

- 6.1
- The whole rural area has access to either a timetabled bus service or the Call Connect service.
 - The whole rural area has access to the rural dial-a-ride service if any resident is unable to use conventional public transport.
 - We are monitoring the changes on behalf of the public and are in discussions with the service providers to carefully manage the situation.

7. IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report is providing Councillors with information on the current situation. Officers are monitoring the situation regarding the implications of these changes including increased journeys by cars from areas affected by the changes.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1
- **The Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation Document** outlined the services at risk because of the reduction in the budget to £600,000 for passenger transport subsidised services.

Outcome: Medium Term Financial Strategy budget of £600,000 for passenger transport subsidised services was approved at Full Council on the 6 March 2013.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation covered a wide range of organisations and meetings including Neighbourhood Committees and scrutiny Committees.

Outcome: The Medium Term Financial Strategy approved on the 6 March 2013.
 - **All City Council Councillors** were written to, and offered a bespoke session, to discuss which services within Peterborough, and specifically their ward, were at risk as part of this review of subsidised services.

Outcome: Meetings held with all Councillors who requested a bespoke session.
 - **The Scrutiny Commission for Rural Communities** requested and received a presentation on services that operated in rural Peterborough and which subsidised services were at risk on the 26 March 2013.

Outcome: The Commission asked for officers to:
 - Provide the Commission and Parish Councils with information on the performance of the Call Connect transport service
 - Provide the Commission with the results of the Local Link Equality Impact Assessment once it had been completed
 - **Transport Forum** (open to the public) and organised by Peterborough Environment City Trust was held at the John Clare Theatre on the 19 February 2013. Officers gave a presentation and a discussion took place regarding the subsidised passenger transport review.

Outcome: An open discussion took place discussing the positive contribution that subsidised services made to Peterborough and a general consensus was that reducing the budget available to passenger transport services was undesirable.
 - **A Cross Party Advisory Group** was set up to discuss the review and to make recommendations regarding which subsidised services should continue to receive funding within the agreed budgetary provision of £600,000. The group met on the following dates:
 - 13th of May 2013
 - 20th of May 2013
 - 21st of May 2013

- 29th of May 2013

Outcome: The group held a series of meetings and considered the issues and information listed below. The Groups recommendation was a reduced overall service which would cost the Council £780,000p.a.

- Equality Impact Assessments for all service options
- Bus Service Review for Local Link services
- Current and projected costs to retain current provision of services
- Presentations from:
 - Stagecoach (all their subsidised services)
 - Atkins (Equality Impact Assessments and Bus Service Review for Local Link services)
 - Centrebus (Kimes 9)
 - Support and advice from Passenger Focus

- **Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee meeting 11 July 2013.** The Committee heard a call-in request and was asked to reconsider the results of the consultation undertaken with regard to the decision to discontinue passenger transport subsidised services. And in doing this whether further consultation was required to fully assess and understand the impact of discontinuing these services on vulnerable members of the public in particular with relation to the Local Link service before making the decision.

Outcome: The Committee agreed to call-in the decision and to refer it back to Cabinet to reconsider.

- **An additional Cross Party Advisory Group meeting (with public) 8 August 2013.** At the Cabinet meeting on 23 July 2013 Cabinet recommended an additional Cross Party Advisory Group meeting be held, with members of the public, to discuss the concerns that some residents and councillors had over the removal of the Local Link services.

Outcome: The Group discussed residents' concerns and the new services that the Council would be implementing to help mitigate against the removal of the Local Link service.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 There are no further committees or Cabinet meetings planned at this stage to discuss subsidised bus services. Officers will continue to monitor the services as well as feedback from members and residents.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 None