

JOINT MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
12 FEBRUARY 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Annette Joyce, Service Director Environment and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development	
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REVIEW OF SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Annette Joyce, Service Director Environment and Economy	Deadline date: 18/02/2019
<p>It is recommended that the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees endorse the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes in timetables to the 60s services, which along with budget efficiency measures and negotiated cost reductions will present the Council an annual saving of £150,000. 2. That Officers will develop a publicity campaign with local bus operators to run during 2019/20 to encourage the public to use local bus services. 3. That the work of the Cross Party Bus Consultation Group will continue in order to review the remaining services supported by the Council to ensure best value is obtained for both the Council and the travelling public. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report follows a proposal accepted in phase two of the Council's budget setting process to: reduce the amount by which the Council subsidises Passenger Transport services by £150k.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report details the recommendations resulting from the work undertaken by the Cross Party Bus Consultation Group to achieve this.

2.2 This report is for Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees to consider under the Terms of Reference 3.2 (a):

Help the Council and the Executive to develop its budget and policy framework and service Budgets;

2.3 This report is directly linked to the Council's responsibility to achieve a balanced budget.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The majority of the city's Passenger Transport Services are provided on a commercial basis by

bus operators. This means that they operate without financial support and have the commercial freedom to decide their own routes, vehicles and infrastructure, timetables and fare structures. To put this into context Stagecoach reported to the Department for Transport that 8.8m bus journeys were undertaken in 2017/18, which when grossed up to take account of other smaller operators equates to approximately 10.1m commercial bus journeys. This means that approximately 3% of commercially delivered journeys operate with subsidy from the Council. The 2018/19 budget for subsidised transport totals £715k. A proposal to reduce the council's spend on subsidised transport by £150,000 was approved by Full Council on 12 December 2018 and officers were specifically asked to identify options for achieving this reduction, in consultation with Group Representatives, without impacting 'demand responsive' services (i.e. Call Connect and Community Link). Instead they considered the £520,000 budget for the 60s services and the evening and weekend services that the Council supports on Stagecoach's Citi network.

4.2 **Stagecoach 60s services:** These services replaced some of the old 'Local Link' services in 2013 and were specifically designed to provide a bus service to those people who, due to location, are not served by a commercial bus service. In spring 2015 a working group was established to consider options to enhance bus provision in the city. The group subsequently agreed to invest an extra £100,000 annually to enhance the services already in place. Passenger numbers provided by Stagecoach show that the 48% additional investment has resulted in just a 9.8% increase in the number of trips when comparing the original services (2015/16) to the revised services (2017/18).

In order to review these services officers met with Stagecoach to discuss different options. Initial proposals received from Stagecoach included removing some early morning, late evening and all Saturday services on these routes. After discussion with members from the Cross Party Consultation Group a second proposal was received from Stagecoach which would replicate a revised Monday to Friday timetable on a Saturday and would result in the following changes:

- 60 – no change to the current timetable;
- 61 – withdraw 0534 and all services after the 1839;
- 62 – withdraw 0509, 1955 and 2315;
- 63 – no change to the current timetable.

(current timetables can be seen in the 'background documents' section of this report)

In order to ascertain the impact of these proposed changes officers requested passenger data from Stagecoach. The following table details the number of trips made on the services during the period between 29 April 2018 and 26 May 2018 and estimates the number of trips made on these services on a typical weekday and a typical Saturday.

61: Peterborough - Fengate - Newark Sainsbury's:

Passengers by period (29/04/18 to 26/05/2018)	05:34	19:06	19:39	20:06	20:39	21:06	21:39	22:06	22:35	22:53
Monday – Friday total trips	1	0	22	24	26	18	24	11	20	2
Monday – Friday daily average	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Saturday total trips	0	5	10	5	0	4	7	8	6	3
Saturday daily average	0	1	3	1	0	1	2	2	2	1

This makes it clear that the number of trips made on these services is extremely low, with some services not being used at all. In order to validate this information officers travelled on each of these services for one week day and one Saturday in January. This showed that these numbers are broadly accurate with no more than three passengers using any timetabled trip. In addition

officers were able to identify that of the 14 people surveyed 10 could've made their trip via an alternative, albeit potentially less convenient, route.

62: Peterborough - Werrington - Glinton – Maxey:

Passengers by period (29/04/18 to 26/05/2018)	05:09	19:55	23:15
Monday – Friday total trips	49	68	39
Monday – Friday daily average	3	4	2
Saturday total trips	1	17	1
Saturday daily average	0	4	0

This makes it clear that the number of trips made on these services is extremely low, with some services not being used at all. In order to validate this information officers travelled on each of these services for one week day and one Saturday in January. This showed that these numbers are broadly accurate with no more than three passengers using any timetabled trip. Crucially, on all observed journeys no passengers travelled further than Werrington. In addition officers were able to identify that of the 10 people surveyed 6 could've made their trip via an alternative, albeit potentially less convenient, route.

In order to deliver this revised timetable Stagecoach have confirmed that an annual subsidy of £193,049.37 is required which has been validated as reasonable by an external expert in the Passenger Transport industry.

- 4.3 **Stagecoach Evening and Weekend ‘Citi’ Services:** This partnership enables Stagecoach to offer an hourly evening and weekend bus service on their Citi network (the Citi network provides approximately 85% of Peterborough’s bus services). Without this support these services would not be commercially viable for Stagecoach to operate. Specifically, the Council supports bus services on routes Citi 1 to Citi 6 after 20:30 on Mondays to Saturdays, and after 17:30 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

As part of the annual contract renegotiation in 2018/19 officers achieved a reduction in the overall subsidy paid to Stagecoach of £14k without any alteration to provision. Officers will continue negotiations for 2019/20 and anticipate a further reduction being achieved due to the increased commerciality of some of these services.

Members of the Cross Party Bus Consultation Group have asked to review this subsidy which, if supported by Cabinet, will be undertaken in line with this contract renegotiation.

In summary this report proposes changes to the 61 and 62 timetable which will result in a saving of £129,950.63. It has also achieved an in year saving of £14k on the Citi services. Officers are confident that the remaining £6,049.37 can be achieved in year.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The proposal to reduce the council's spend on subsidised transport by £150,000 was approved by Full Council on 12 December 2018 as part of the phase two budget setting process. The following activity has been undertaken in relation to the proposal contained within this report to reduce service provision on the 61 and 62 bus routes:

Cross Party Bus Consultation Group: This group was established in order to review options for how these savings could be achieved. Members of the group reviewed passenger numbers for the routes affected and support the proposals contained within this report. However, the Liberal Democrat Group do not support any overall reduction in public transport subsidy and recommend that these savings be reinvested to improve other bus services.

Public drop in event: A press release was issued and social media channels were used to invite members of the public and local Councillors to attend a lunchtime and/or evening drop in session with officers to discuss the proposals. At the session officers were available to support members of the public to review alternative journey options where feasible. A total of 3 people attended these events, none of whom would be directly affected by these proposals. Officers also invited members of the public to email if they couldn't attend the drop in sessions but to date only five emails have been received, all from individuals who gave no indication that they will be directly affected by these changes.

Peterborough Disability Forum: Officers have met with a representative of the Disability Forum. The Disability Forum have confirmed that they understand that the Council has difficult decisions to make and with that in mind are supportive of this proposal.

Peterborough Pensioners Association (PPA): Officers have attended a PPA meeting. The PPA have confirmed that they understand that the Council has difficult decisions to make and with that in mind raised no objections to this proposal.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees endorse the information contained within this report and support the proposed changes to the 61 and 62 bus routes.

Whilst it is clear that some members of the public will be affected by these changes it is also evident, from data provided by Stagecoach, and trips undertaken by officers on the affected routes that the number of people directly affected will be minimal.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The recommendations contained within this report are a direct outcome of the work undertaken by the Cross Party Bus Working Group. This group have reviewed data detailing the number of passengers affected by the proposed changes alongside over contextual information and have determined that this is the most appropriate way to achieve the required reduction whilst protecting the most vulnerable user groups.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 **Consider alternative subsidised services:** the routes considered in this report are those in which the Council invested additional funds in 2015 on a trial basis. As such, and due to the low number of passengers travelling, it was appropriate to consider these routes first whilst seeking to protect the most vulnerable user groups.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 The recommendations contained within this report will allow the Council to achieve the £150k saving accepted by Full Council on 12 December 2018. It will also allow the work of the Cross Party Bus Working Group to continue in order to review the remaining services supported by the Council.

The Liberal Democrat Group do not support any overall reduction in public transport subsidy and recommend that these savings be reinvested to improve other bus services. However the Cabinet are required to exercise their responsibilities for decision making so as not to make a decision where they are 'minded to determine the matter contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the authorities budget'. This means that a decision that leads to expenditure over the amount allowed by Council in the Budget Book or expenditure of unexpected new money outside the Budget is required to have approval of the Council before the Leader and the Cabinet can make that decision.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 Currently services are supported by the Council, following a delegation of powers from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as a direct result of the section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985, where all Transport Authorities are required:

“to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose”.

Therefore, the Council has a statutory duty to act in accordance with the provisions under 63(1)(a) - not to do so could be subject to legal challenge. What this means in reality is that the Council need to give careful consideration to any changes and undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment, but this in itself does not prevent services being cut.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority agreed at its Board meeting on 30th January 2019 that it would set a Transport Levy based on existing 2019/20 budgets set by both Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. This would allow services to be delivered whilst options for the future are considered. This funding will remain with the respective highways authorities to continue to operate the services in 2019/20.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 An initial equalities impact assessment has been undertaken (appendix a). This allows us to see that there are minimal people using these services on a regular basis with no protected characteristic groups disproportionately affected.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 The 62 service operates in some rural areas of the city including: Newborough, Peakirk, Glington, Etton and Maxey and the changes to these services mean that these areas will not have access to a bus service after 17:50. However conversations with Stagecoach and observations undertaken by officers show that very few people use this service to travel further than Werrington.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

- 10.1 The current timetables for these routes can be viewed here:

- 60 Peterborough – Hampton – Orton: <https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/East/PETERBOROUGH/PE%20-%20SERVICE%2063%20-%20APR%202018.pdf>
- 61 Peterborough – Fengate – Newark Sainsbury's: <https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/East/PETERBOROUGH/PE%20-%20SERVICE%2061%20-%20APR%202018.pdf>
- 62 Peterborough – Werrington – Glington – Maxey: <https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/East/PETERBOROUGH/PE%20-%20SERVICE%2062%20-%20APR%202018.pdf>
- 63 Peterborough – Newark Sainsbury's – Keys Park: <https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/East/PETERBOROUGH/PE%20-%20SERVICE%2063%20-%20APR%202018.pdf>

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment can be viewed at appendix A.

Equality Impact Assessment: Capability - Performance Policy

Initial assessment

What are the proposed outcomes of the policy?

The majority of the city's Passenger Transport Services are provided on a commercial basis by bus operators. This means that they operate without financial support and have the commercial freedom to decide their own routes, vehicles, infrastructure, timetables and fare structures. To put this into context, Stagecoach reported to the Department for Transport that 8.8m bus journeys were undertaken in 2017/18, which when grossed up to take account of other smaller operators equates to approximately 10.1m commercial bus journeys. This means that approximately 3% of commercially delivered journeys operate with subsidy from the Council.

The 2018/19 budget for subsidised transport totals £715k. A proposal to reduce the council's spend on subsidised transport by £150,000 was approved by Full Council on 12 December 2018. Officers were specifically asked to identify options for achieving this reduction, in consultation with Group Representatives, without impacting 'demand responsive' services (i.e. Call Connect and Community Link) but instead to consider the £520,000 budget for the 60s services and the evening and weekend services that the Council supports on Stagecoach's Citi network.

Currently services are supported by the Council, following a delegation of powers from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, as a direct result of the section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985, where all Transport Authorities are required: "to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose". Therefore, the Council has a statutory duty to act in accordance with the provisions under 63(1)(a) - not to do so could be subject to legal challenge. What this means in reality is that the Council needs to give careful consideration to any changes and undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment, but this in itself does not prevent services being cut.

In order to explore options to achieve this proposal two of the subsidised services have been reviewed: the Stagecoach 60's services and the Stagecoach evening and weekend services on the Citi network.

Stagecoach 60s services: These services replaced some of the old 'Local Link' services in 2013 and were specifically designed to provide a bus service to those people who, due to location, are not served by a commercial bus service. In spring 2015 a working group was established to consider options to enhance bus provision in the city. The group subsequently agreed to invest an extra £100,000 annually to enhance the services already in place. Passenger numbers provided by Stagecoach show that the 48% additional investment has resulted in just a 9.8% increase in the number of trips when comparing the original services (2015/16) to the revised services (2017/18).

In order to review these services officers met with Stagecoach to discuss different options. Initial proposals received from Stagecoach included removing some early morning, late evening and all Saturday services on these routes. After discussion with members from the Cross Party Consultation Group a second proposal was received from Stagecoach which would replicate a revised Monday to Friday timetable on a Saturday and would result in the following changes:

- 60 – no change to the current timetable;
- 61 – withdraw 0534 and all services after the 1839;
- 62 – withdraw 0509, 1955 and 2315;
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Monday – Friday daily average	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

Saturday total trips	0	5	10	5	0	4	7	8	6	3
Saturday daily average	0	1	3	1	0	1	2	2	2	1

This makes it clear that the number of trips made on these services is extremely low, with some services not being used at all during this period. When the data is averaged out to look at a single day the highest number of people travelling on any single service during the monitored period is calculated to be three people. In order to validate this information officers travelled on each of these services for one weekday and one Saturday in January. Officers had a number of questions they were seeking to observe i.e. boarding and alighting point and questions they sought to ask passengers i.e. could the journey be made by an alternative route. However, of the 18 timetabled journeys officers travelled on only 14 people travelled, and as a result the data is not sufficient to draw sufficient conclusions other than: any changes to these services will effect a very small number of people; of the 14 people who travelled 10 could've made their trip via an alternative, albeit potentially less convenient, route.

62: Peterborough - Werrington - Glinton – Maxey:

Passengers by period (29/04/18 to 26/05/2018)	05:09	19:55	23:15
Monday – Friday total trips	49	68	39
Monday – Friday daily average	3	4	2
Saturday total trips	1	17	1
Saturday daily average	0	4	0

This makes it clear that the number of trips made on these services is extremely low, with some services not being used at all during this period. When the data is averaged out to look at a single day the highest number of people travelling on any single service during the monitored period is calculated to be four people. In order to validate this information officers travelled on each of these services for one weekday and one Saturday in January. Officers had a number of questions they were seeking to observe i.e. boarding and alighting point and questions they sought to ask passengers i.e. could the journey be made by an alternative route. However, of the 6 timetabled journeys officers travelled on only 10 people travelled, and as a result the data is not sufficient to draw sufficient conclusions other than: any changes to these services will effect a very small number of people; of the 10 people who travelled 6 could've made their trip via an alternative, albeit potentially less convenient, route.

In order to deliver this revised timetable Stagecoach have confirmed that an annual subsidy of £193,049.37 is required which has been validated as reasonable by an external expert in the Passenger Transport industry.

The Stagecoach evening and weekend services (Citi network): This partnership enables Stagecoach to offer an hourly evening and weekend bus service on their Citi network (the Citi network provides approximately 85% of Peterborough's bus services). Without this support these services would not be commercially viable for Stagecoach to operate.

As part of the contract renegotiation for 2018/19, officers achieved a reduction of £14k to the overall subsidy for these services without any changes to the timetables. Continued discussions with Stagecoach in line with negotiations for the 2019/20 contract are anticipated to achieve further savings. Any remaining saving will be achieved in year with no impact on the travelling public.

Which individuals or groups are most likely to be affected?

As the section above details the evidence indicates that there are very few people using the services where changes are proposed. However the following information is known:

- Analysis of ticket type during the period from 29 April 2018 and 26 May 2018: this shows that the following tickets are purchased on the 61 service:

Monday to Friday - Concessionary (9%), Megarider (69%), Day ticket (20%) and other (1%).
Saturday - Concessionary (27%), Megarider (42%), Day ticket (27%) and other (4%).

And for the 62 service:

Monday to Friday - Concessionary (17%), Megarider (67%), Day ticket (13%) and other (3%).

Saturday - Concessionary (37%), Megarider (53%), Day ticket (11%) and other (0%).

This allows us to see that the majority of tickets purchased are Megariders which are typically purchased by people with work or other specific commitments.

Of the 24 people who were observed or responded to questions asked by officers whilst travelling on the services we can see that:

Age: Under 18 (0), 18-24 (4), 25-64 (15) and over 65 (5).

Gender: Female (15) and male (9).

Ethnic Group: This was an optional question. White (24) and Black or black British (1)

Disability: This was an optional question. No disabilities were recorded.

Now consider whether any of the following groups will be disproportionately affected:

Equality Group	Note any positive or negative effects
Particular age groups	<p>There are two factors which suggest whether a particular age group will be effected by this change:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The analysis of ticket type purchased during the monitoring period from 29 April 2018 and 26 May 2018 show that for both of the affected routes the majority of tickets purchased were Megariders, this ticket type is typically used by an individual of working age who has work or other regular commitments. 2. Of the 24 people who were observed or responded to questions asked by officers whilst travelling on the services we can see that the majority, 63%, were aged between 25 and 64 years.
Disabled people	There is no evidence to suggest disabled people would be disproportionately affected.
Married couples or those entered into a civil partnership	There is no evidence to suggest that married couples or those entered into a civil partnership would be disproportionately affected.
Pregnant women or women on maternity leave	There is no evidence to suggest pregnant women or women on maternity leave would be disproportionately affected.
Particular ethnic groups	Of the 24 people who were observed or responded to questions asked by officers whilst travelling on the services we can see that the majority, 96%, are white.
Those of a particular religion or who hold a particular belief	There is no evidence to suggest those of a particular religion or who hold a particular belief would be disproportionately affected.
Male/Female	Of the 24 people who were observed or responded to questions asked by officers whilst travelling on the services we can see that the majority, 63%, are female

Those proposing to undergo, currently undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment	There is no evidence to suggest those proposing to undergo, currently undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment would be disproportionately affected.
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence to suggest those with a particular sexual orientation would be disproportionately affected.

What information is available to help you understand the effect this will have on the groups identified above?

Who will be the beneficiaries of the policy?

This change enables the Council to set a balanced budget which is in the best interest of the residents and businesses of the city.

Has the policy been explained to those it might affect directly or indirectly?

Two activities have been undertaken to explain the change to those that might be affected:

1. Officers have travelled on the bus on one weekday and on one Saturday for all of the journeys affected. Officers spoke to individuals travelling, where possible, in order to complete the surveys. One of the questions involved asking whether the journey could've been made by any other means. Officers found that where this was possible the majority of people were already aware of their alternative options i.e. catch one of the Citi services.
2. Officers reviewed the data captured as part of the survey process and were able to establish that when the alighting point was investigated 67% of people could've used an alternative, albeit slightly less convenient alternative service.
3. Officers issued a press release to invite members of the public to attend a daytime or evening 'drop in' session with officers to discuss the proposals, Three people (two households) attended the sessions in total.

Can any differences be justified as appropriate or necessary?

Are any remedial actions required?

Whilst it is clear that some members of the public will be affected by these changes it is also evident, from data provided by Stagecoach, and trips undertaken by officers on the affected routes that the number of people directly affected will be very low. As discussed earlier, when the data is averaged out to look at a single day the highest number of people travelling on any single service during the monitored period is calculated to be four people. In order to support anyone directly affected officers will continue to be available to discuss alternative options where feasible. For those individuals where no alternative public transport option is viable the Council feel that the proposal to change these services is necessary in order to deliver the savings and is proportionate and objectively justified in this situation given the low level of usage.

Once implemented, how will you monitor the actual impact?

Officers will respond to enquiries received from members of the public and advise them of alternative routes as feasible.

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