

SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES	Agenda Item No. 5
26 March 2013	Public Report

Report of the Executive Director of Operations

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PASSENGER TRANSPORT AND BUS SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The commission requested information regarding the following topics:

- **Any developments with Call Collect**

There are no recent developments regarding call connect however as part of the bus service review options around expanding existing demand response transport (including call connect) is being considered. An officer will attend the scrutiny meeting and answer any questions that members may have regarding this item.

- **A description of rural services as they stand**
- **Likely problems and development**

Councillors have received an invite to make an appointment to come and speak to one of my team or me, regarding any concerns you may have regarding the reduction in subsidised passenger transport services resulting of budget changes adopted on the 6th of March at full Council.

We are in a position to provide you with the following information at these individual appointments:

- Current Service (both Commercial and Supported, post 10th Feb commercial change)
- What is at risk?
- Information about who travels and why
- Possible Mitigations & Alternatives

An officer will however attend the rural commission and discuss with Councillors any general queries they may have regarding this agenda item. A detailed analysis of this subject matter is available by appointment with the team, as stated earlier.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Councillors are asked to consider the report and the discussion at the commission meeting and feedback any comments to officers.

Councillors are recommended to make an individual appointment with the team to discuss this item in detail.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

3.1 Community strategy links:

- Delivering substantial and truly sustainable growth; through providing the best possible affordable subsidised service
- Creating the UK's environment capital; by supporting, as far as practicable, sustainable transport modes.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Current situation

As you are aware, the council has been committed over the past decade to encouraging people to use our public transport under our Travelchoice initiative.

However, there are still many underused bus services in the city. Currently these services are only able to continue to run because the council subsidises them. If they were not subsidised then some bus services would not exist and other services would not run at certain times at nights, on Bank Holidays or Sunday evenings.

The council currently spends £1.1m subsidising public passenger transport.

Among the services we subsidise are:

- Some of Stagecoach's weekend and evening buses
- Local Link 401/401A,404,406,407,408,410 and 411 Enterprise
- Local Link 413 Centrebus
- Community Link and Dial-a-Ride

The local link services contracts are due to expire in March 2013 and an independent assessment has identified that the cost of these services is likely to increase by **£535k** which means we would need to spend £1.6 million for services to continue as they are.

The budget adopted at Council on the 6th of March means that we are to deliver a service with an indicative cost of £600K. This requires that we make a saving £500K from the existing £1.1m budget (as this is our best estimate for the amount required to meet our statutory duties to vulnerable people).

At present, no decision has been taken on what services will be provided as we are undertaking a review, however, 2013/14 would be a transitional year for the service. We aim to continue to offer the same service as we do now from April 2013 for up to 6 months, accepting the short-term cost increases while we procure a new service and pattern of service. Then after 6 months, we propose to start to run the £600K service.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 For information Item, no key issues at this stage.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No implications at present, this is information only item on the committee's agenda.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 An invite has been set for member to discuss the current situation with officers.

8. NEXT STEPS

8.1 The committee to consider the information provide by officer at the meeting.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

10.1 None

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