

MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD 23 JULY 2013

PRESENT

Cabinet Members: Councillor Cereste (chair), Councillor Fitzgerald, Councillor Goodwin, Councillor Holdich, Councillor North, Councillor Scott and Councillor Walsh.

Cabinet Advisers: Councillor Dalton, Councillor Goodwin and Councillor Todd

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Casey, Councillor Elsey and Councillor Seaton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

ITEMS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

3. PASSENGER TRANSPORT – SUBSIDISED SERVICE PROVISION

Cabinet received a report to consider the referral from the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee relating to the Cabinet Decision taken on 1 July 2013, Passenger Transport - Subsidised Service Provision. Cabinet was requested to:

1. Reconsider the results of the consultation undertaken with regard to the decision to discontinue Passenger Transport Subsidised Services; and in doing this
2. Undertake further consultation 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.

Cabinet was addressed by Councillors Peach, Shearman, Harrington and Sandford in turn who raised concerns and questions on behalf of the other political groups and on behalf of residents. Issues raised included:

- The Local Link services provided many more accessible stopping points to the Stagecoach run services;
- Must have a comprehensive bus service for the whole city;
- Retain the most used of the Local Link services;
- Most impact would be on the most vulnerable;
- More should be done to investigate how to keep the services running;
- Government funding in January 2014 should be used;
- The advisory group report was not considered enough;
- Wider implications to the cuts than just the bus service;
- School runs and shopping trips affected;
- Demand Response Services cannot cover all timetabled service areas;
- Wider consultation needed early on; and
- Retention of evening services important.

The Council's Transport & Infrastructure Planning Manager confirmed that proposed government funding would not equate to an increase in overall funding so would not affect the fund available to provide subsidised transport services. Cabinet was further advised of the current Demand Response Transport (DRT) services in the city and how the proposed additional funding could enhance that service and ensure that school and peak time demands could be covered. The Transport & Infrastructure Planning Manager further advised that the tender process for the future service contracts were open to all companies to bid for, including the current provider, Enterprise.

Some members of the public were given the opportunity to address Cabinet to highlight their concerns. Issues raised included:

- In some villages there would be no service to get into the City Centre as not all residents can get to the bus stops for the Delaine buses;
- Many elderly residents would be left isolated;
- Local Link buses were vital not just to access services but to access jobs and employment to boost the city;
- Some services were well used so should retain these;
- Could introduce a charge for bus pass holders;
- Local Link stop near many nursing homes so elderly can access local amenities;
- Should have consulted more widely before Cabinet met;
- Cabinet should listen to what residents want; and
- Not enough capacity in DRT to cover all the demand.

Cabinet considered the comments that had been raised and during their debate raised issues including:

- The available budget was set by full Council in March;
- Current call connect services were well supported in some rural areas;
- Some level of timetabled service should be retained for rural areas;
- School children and workers use the buses too, not just the elderly and disabled;
- DRT could provide a service for vulnerable residents; and
- Business needs should be considered along the routes of the buses.

Cabinet considered the recommendations from the Sustainable Growth and Environment Capital Scrutiny Committee and the comments and concerns raised at the meeting and **RESOLVED** to:

Confirm the decision taken on 1 July and agreed to an additional recommendation, noted below, before adopting the final decision:

10. A meeting of the cross party advisory group would be convened to which members of the public would be invited to consider the outcome of the procurement exercise. Such meeting is to be convened before any further decision to award contracts for the bus passenger transport services.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

In accordance with the procedure rules in Part 4 Section 8 of the Council's constitution Cabinet, as the decision taker, had to reconsider the decision within 10 working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

In order to ensure that further public opinion could be received on any final proposals for the future service, an additional advisory group meeting with councillors and members of the public would be held.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Cabinet could have adopted the original decision without amendments. This would not have allowed any further input from the public and other councillors on the final proposals for the future service.

6.20 p.m.

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