

CABINET	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
21 SEPTEMBER 2015	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital	
Contact Officer(s):	Simon Machen, Corporate Director Growth and Regeneration	Tel. 453475

SUBSIDISED PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE PROVISION

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM : <i>Passenger Transport Subsidised Service Review - Cross Party Working Group</i>	Deadline date : <i>21st September 2015</i>
<p>That Cabinet considers the following recommendation of the Cross Party Working Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That an additional £150,000 per annum should be introduced into the subsidised Passenger Transport budget (reduced pro-rata for the 2015-16 financial year) to enhance existing supported service provision, as set out in this report. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following a recommendation from Cabinet on 4th March 2015 that a Cross Party Working Group was established, in accordance with the Council's Constitution: Part 4, Section 7 - Executive Procedure Rules.
- 1.2 The terms of reference of Cross Party Working Group focused on making recommendations to Cabinet regarding increased funding options for the passenger transport subsidised service.
- 1.3 The membership of the Cross Party Working Group was: Councillor Chris Ash (Independent), Councillor Judy Fox (Werrington First), Councillor Brian Rush (Conservative), Councillor Nick Sandford (Liberal Democrat), Councillor John Shearman (Labour), Councillor John Whitby (UKIP). Officer assistance was provided by Mark Speed (Commissioning Manager Transport and Infrastructure) and Richard Mayes (Principal Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning Officer).

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the recommendations of the Cross Party Working Group established to consider a potential increase in the budget for subsidised transport provision of up to £150,000, and to consider the views of the Budget Working Group on these proposed enhancements to services. This will be discussed at the meeting of the Budget Working Group on 14 September 2015 and a verbal update of their views will be reported at the meeting so that Cabinet can consider their views before taking a decision.
- 2.2 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 3.2.1 'to take collective responsibility for the delivery of all strategic Executive functions within the Council's Major Policy and Budget Framework and lead the Council's overall improvement programmes to deliver excellent services'.

3. **TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO
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4. **SUBSIDISED PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICE PROVISION**

4.1 The majority of the city's Passenger Transport Services are provided on a commercial basis by operators in Peterborough. This means that they operate without financial support, and have the commercial freedom to decide their own routes, timetables and fare structures.

4.2 Some services currently operate with the support of funding from Peterborough City Council, and these include:

- Service 20, 21 & 22 (introduced in October 2013 as a replacement for Local Link)
- Evening 'Citi' services in Peterborough
- Demand Responsive Transport – for those who have no access to alternative services, or have serious mobility issues
 - Community Link (accessible urban dial-a-ride)
 - Octane (Orton Community Transport) (accessible rural dial-a-ride)
 - Social Car Service (RVS)
 - Call Connect (dial-a-ride operated in conjunction with Lincolnshire County Council)

4.3 The Council currently spends approximately £600k annually supporting these services (net of the ring-fenced Bus Service Operators Grant from Government which further supports the cost of these services).

4.4 As part of the 2015/16 budget, Council resolved to establish a Cross Party Working Group to consider further investment of up to £150,000 (reduced pro-rata for the current budget year) into subsidised transport.

4.5 The Cross Party Working Group assessed the current position regarding the supported services introduced in 2013, and consideration was given to whether the current service provision should change. The Group considered that because this provision had been formulated based on a thorough, in depth and relatively recent review which included a full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), and that as the Group had been tasked with recommendations regarding increased funding as opposed to withdrawing funding, that the areas currently served should remain fundamentally the same. This would ensure that the position established, based on the 2013 review in the lead up to the withdrawal of the former Local Link services in 2013, and the service provided to the vulnerable and protected groups identified, is maintained.

4.6 As services for vulnerable members of the community have been provided as a result of the understanding gained from the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) the Cross Party Working Group considered that the most appropriate use of further investment of up to £150,000 should be focussed on enhancements to services in Fengate that would better meet the needs of this important employment area, and also better serve the night time economy in this area through:

- Amended routing to better serve the area.
- Services that allow workers to get to employment areas for the 06:00, 14:00 and 22:00 start and finish times.
- Services that allow workers to get to employment areas for the 07:00-09:00 start and 17:00 finish times.
- Services that give access to facilities in Fengate, such as the cinema and the greyhound stadium, that also feed into the final supported services of the evening on the Citi bus network to allow people to get home.

- 4.7 Through delivery of the above, further benefit is provided for the Dogsthorpe Road / Garton End Road area by splitting the Service 21 into two separate services.
- 4.8 The additional budget would allow for the provision of improved times for the Service 20 (Stanground – Hampton – Orton), to allow a greater amount of time in the city.
- 4.9 Additionally the opportunity was presented to give a departure that better suits conventional working patterns, and a later departure into the rural areas on Service 22. A slight re-routing would also re-establish a direct link between Gunthorpe and Werrington.
- 4.10 The Cross Party Working Group considered that this proposal presents value and the potential for growth because supporting services through increased utilisation of vehicle resources is more cost effective than using an additional vehicle. In addition supporting an area for growth would positively impact the city as a whole by enabling sustainable transport options to places of work and leisure.
- 4.11 The recommendation to enhance services would see an increased level of provision along key supported routes. This would have a positive impact through an increase in the number of service options at appropriate times to get elderly residents to the city centre, in order to connect with hospital services. The proposed enhancements would also see a slight increase in the number of services on the southern end of Lincoln Road, passing the new surgery site at the junction of Lincoln Road and Craig Street. The re-establishment of the link between Gunthorpe to connect with the Citi 2, and Werrington Centre, additionally opens up passenger transport access to medical facilities in the latter for those in the Gunthorpe area.
- 4.12 There was agreement from the Cross Party Working Group to present this proposal for the use of the available funding to Cabinet. The detail of the proposals are available in Appendix A.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Formal consultation was not considered necessary, due to the extensive consultation in 2013 with local stakeholders and communities, at the time of the previous bus service review. Service levels have not changed since this consultation in 2013. Comments raised since the previous review were taken on board as part of this review process by the Cross Party Working Group. Vulnerable organisations and people would not be adversely affected by the proposed changes to services because the current level of service and routes would be maintained and enhanced. Additionally, this was to ensure that a whole city view, considering the growth agenda, was taken rather than focussing on smaller areas, and micro-agendas. The proposals were constructed across several meetings of the Working Group and took into consideration the work that had been undertaken in 2013. The Group considered enhancements to the current services and routes served rather than fundamentally changing the supported service provision. A number of ideas were discussed, and localised amendments for the benefit of those using the services, have been suggested. The proposal met with the collective agreement of the Members involved to present to Cabinet.
- 5.2 The existing contract in relation to the services commenced in October 2013 on the basis that reviews would take place every two years, over a period of 8 years. Consultation is being undertaken as part of this process with the current contract provider, Stagecoach, during September 2015. It was recognised at the outset of the contract that this approach posed some degree of financial risk because the price agreed originally was for the first two years of the contract and maintaining the same level of service may cost more than agreed at the outset. It was considered appropriate to ensure that the Council was aware of what was being sought through the review, prior to entering discussion with the operator.
- 5.3 Initial engagement is underway with local businesses in the Fengate area, as part of the Government funded Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme, regarding

financial support for sustainable transport, and encouraging employees to make use of sustainable transport.

- 5.4 Fengate, as an area with no services other than those supported by the Council, would see a significant enhancement under the proposal due to potential for sustainable growth, however the other subsidised bus routes also see improvements or enhancements. The impact of this change will not, therefore, disproportionately impact on any individuals with protected characteristics over and above the impacts on the general population.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 6.1 That Cabinet will determine the recommendation of the Cross Party Working Group, informed by the views of the Budget Working Group, to invest up to a further £150,000 per annum (reduced pro rata) in subsidised public transport, which would include extension of the existing contract or a re-procurement of the services.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 For Cabinet to consider the views of the Cross Party Working Group and determine whether to introduce improvements to the supported bus network through increased budget provision.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Consideration was given by the Cross Party Working Group to providing a completely new supported bus network, however this was rejected by the Group on the basis that the current provision was introduced 2 years ago following a significant budget reduction, taking into account a detailed study and Equality Impact Assessment, that the contract is currently underway with a two yearly review, and it was felt that a level of stability in service provision was required to assist those accessing the transport services.
- 8.2 The proposed enhancement would see operating hours extended, but consideration was also given to enhancing the level of services during the daytime through an additional vehicle, however this was rejected by the Cross Party Working Group on the basis that extending operating hours presents a better value proposal, opening up services to key areas, and potentially growing the bus market.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Legal Implications – The Council has a power under the Local Transport Act 2008 to take steps that are required to meet local public transport needs.
- 9.2 The price of the revised service proposals have not been confirmed at this stage, however the proposal has been developed so that elements of the proposed timetable can be removed, effectively on a sliding scale, in order to bring the proposal within the potential budget increase.
- 9.3 In the event that the enhanced service provision is agreed by Cabinet, the additional costs would need to be met as follows:
- In 2015/16, funding was set aside in the capacity fund reserve to meet the part year costs
 - In 2016/17, the £150,000 pressure would need to be built into the budget proposals, as they have not currently been factored in. This would widen the budget gap that the Council faces, as outlined in a separate report on this Cabinet Agenda.
 - Depending on the length of the contract, for any years after this the pressure will also need building into budget plans, widening the budget gap in those years.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

None.

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