

Review of Bus Services supported by subsidised transport budget to ensure efficiency and value for money is achieved

Councillor Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development

FEBRUARY 2019

Deadline date: 18 February 2019

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Councillor Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development Insert name and title of Director Annette Joyce, Service Director Environment and Economy
Is this a Key Decision?	YES If yes has it been included on the Forward Plan: YES (Not for full 28 day period, urgency procedure invoked) Unique Key decision Reference from Forward Plan: KEY/06MAR19/01
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	NO (Waiver of call-in procedure invoked)
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO Verto number: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

1. Approve changes in timetables to the 60s bus services, as set out in the report, which, along with budget efficiency measures and negotiated cost reductions, will present the Council an annual saving of £150,000.
2. Approve the development of a publicity campaign with local bus operators to run during 2019/20 to encourage the public to use local bus services.
3. Support the continuation of the Cross Party Bus Consultation Group 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. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Growth, Planning, Housing and Economic Development to consider exercising delegated authority under paragraph 3.4.3 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (b).

- 1.2 With the approval of the Chairman of the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee Urgency, Special Urgency and waiver of call-in procedures have been invoked to suspend the requirement to advertise the decision for the full 28 days, publish the decision for 5 days prior to publication, and to suspend the 3 day call-in period.
- 1.3 These urgency procedures were invoked due to the requirement to amend the timetables for the 61 and 62 bus service operated by Stagecoach as close as possible to the 1st of April 2019. In order to achieve this it is necessary to register the revised timetable with the Traffic Commissioner, providing 42 days notice, and to give the public reasonable notice of the forthcoming changes. Failure to do this will result in financial pressure on the Council.

2. TIMESCALES

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

- 3.1 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.

- 3.2 **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.

3.3 **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 along with contract renegotiations for the Citi services will enable the Council to achieve the £150k reduction required.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 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.

Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees: A report detailing the proposed changes detailed in this report was presented to the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees on 12 February 2019 and the recommendations contained were agreed. In addition Scrutiny asked that officers ascertain from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority what the £3.5 million transport levy to be paid by Peterborough City Council was to be spent on from 1 April 2019. This funding reflects the Council's anticipated budget for 2019/20 for Passenger Transport including subsidising services and reimbursing the costs of Concessionary Fares. In reality the Council will be levied this amount and then the same amount will be paid back to Peterborough City Council to allow us to continue to fund this service provision.

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the Cabinet Member endorse the information contained within this report and agree to 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.

6. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 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.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 **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.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 8.1 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.

Legal Implications

- 8.2 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

- 8.3 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.

9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

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 – Glinton – 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.