

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION FOR RURAL
COMMUNITIES HELD AT THE BOURGES / VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL
ON 18 JULY 2011**

PRESENT: Councillors D Over (Chairman), Cllr G Nawaz (Vice Chairman), Sanders, Harrington, Shaheed and E Murphy

OFFICERS Sara Thompson, Team Manager, Passenger Transport Operations

PRESENT: Diane Baker, Head of Governance
Paulina Ford, Senior Governance Officer
Karen Dunleavy, Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received

2. Declaration of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2011 were approved as an accurate record.

4. School Transport Pick Up Points

The report informed Members on the school transport arrangements for school children attending rural schools. The Team Manager for Passenger Transport Operations advised that the service provided was a legal obligation and that eligibility of the provision was set out by Children's Services. The location of the bus stops had been decided on historical patterns of passengers over the years and would be identified by poles, signs or shelters. An audit had been conducted of bus stops in Peterborough by the Passenger Transport Contracts and Planning Team with a second audit due, however, due to resources the second audit report would take some time to conduct.

The following comments, observations and questions were raised:

- Members raised a question regarding the number of designated bus stops detailed in the audit and whether the department kept a record of incidents that had occurred at any of the bus stops in rural areas? *The Team Manager of Passenger Transport Operations confirmed that a full risk assessment was carried out at a rural bus stop where an incident had occurred. Risk assessments would take place whenever an incident was reported.*
- Members raised a question regarding parental mileage claims and whether parents could be encouraged to pool cars? *The Team Manager for Passenger Transport Operations advised that a child was eligible under the policy for transport to school parental mileage where it was more cost effective than any alternative transport available. It would be parental choice whether to adopt a pooled car system and this would not be co-ordinated by the Passenger Transport Operations Team. The Mileage rate was set at twenty five point two pence per mile however, following a review it could increase to forty pence.*

Passenger Transport had recently introduced a scheme, which would enable a child and parent to travel by public transport and be issued with a Mega Rider bus pass. The aim was to encourage parents to accompany children using the bus services.

- *Members raised a question regarding access to suitable footpaths for Children travelling to school? Parents were responsible for ensuring children travelled to school safely. The Geographic Information System was used to measure a safe walking route from home to school. If there was a concern raised about pathway access to a particular bus stop the Passenger Transport Team would assess the area on request.*
- *Members raised concerns over the Werrington Bridge road which was notorious for accidents, and whether signage or road markings could be introduced to make drivers aware children would be present in the area at certain times of the day? Members were informed that the stop was not a designated public transport stop. An assessment was carried out at the time of the incident and it was not possible to implement such measures at every rural location when families could move address. The Team Manager for Passenger Transport Operations would speak to the Network Team Manager to determine whether the speed limit for the area could be reviewed.*
- *Members raised a concern that some bus stops located in rural areas had heavy traffic on some roads. Members were advised that bus stops on any route would be revisited by the Passenger Transport Team following the receipt of any concern raised.*
- *Members raised concerns regarding the safety of students travelling to school on motorbikes and cars and that if the bus stops were of a better quality it would be more attractive for students to use. School travel plans try to encourage students to travel by bus. Funding was available through Local Transport Plan three to upgrade bus shelters and Members were invited to send the Team Manager of Passenger Transport Operations suggestions on bus stop locations requiring an upgrade. Passenger Transport Operations had no budget for upgrading bus shelters and would need to refer the details to relevant officers.*
- *Members raised concerns regarding bus lay-bys recently removed from opposite the Toscanini restaurant in Eye and Bainton and asked that consideration was given to review these locations.*

Actions

It was agreed that the Team Manager for Passenger Transportation Operations would undertake the following actions:

- Provide feedback to Members regarding Bainton, where there were incidents of cars undertaking buses; and at the Ashton bus stop.
- Speak with Network Team Manager regarding the request which had been submitted for introducing a bus stop in the village of Newborough on Gunton's road Westside.
- Clarify to Members what a ghost stop was.
- To raise the issues highlighted by Members regarding the pick up points in Eye, and Bainton. The Road Safety team would be contacted to promote Road Safety which would encourage better attitudes to driving in those areas.

- To raise Members' concerns over the Werrington Bridge Road bus stop with the Network Team Manager in order investigate the option of reducing the speed limit to 30 miles an hour.

It was also agreed that:

- The Network Team Manager would review road signs and markings highlighted in rural areas to make improvements for bus stops that do not have designated bus lay-bys.

5. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The latest version of the Forward Plan, showing details of the key decisions that the Leader of the Council believed the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would be making over the next four months, was received.

Cllr Over has invited Members to suggest any item for the forward plan.

It was agreed to scrutinise the Cambridgeshire Community Services and the provision for adult health care for the elderly in rural areas.

6. Work Programme

Members discussed and considered work programme items for the forthcoming meetings and allocated each topic for inclusion on the agendas as follows:

19 September 2011

In September we will be looking at the Draft Housing Strategy and ask an officer to

- Draft housing strategy – plans for rural areas
- Tree and woodlands strategy – preservation
- Footpaths and Cycle routes in Rural Areas

It was agreed to broaden the terms to unmade bridle ways and footpaths and the improvements.

21 November 2011

- Making villages energy sustainable – looking at solar panel options for rural houses
- Tourism – how this can be improved in rural areas
- Women's Enterprise - Update

9 January 2012

- Brief budget meeting for rural issues
- Visit from Opportunity Peterborough and GrowBorough to update on work being carried out in start up and support of businesses in rural areas
- Presentation from Transport Police – railway crossings

It was agreed that grow borough would be invited to attend a future meeting to provide more information regarding growth in rural areas.

19 March 2012

- Leisure provision in the rural area
- Educational attainment in the rural area – successes compared locally and nationally in primary and secondary schools

It was also requested to include the provision of pre-schools and Children's Centres on the work plan.

ACTION AGREED

To note the latest version of the Forward Plan.

7. Date of the next Meeting

Monday, 19 September 2011.

CHAIRMAN
7.00pm - 7.45pm