

THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 September 2014

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP – 12 MONTH REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

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RECENT REFERENCES:

OS66 – Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The recommendations made by the Council's Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group were supported in principle by Cabinet in June 2013 (CAB2482 refers).

This report summarises progress against those recommendations.

The City Council is not the public transport authority, and has no statutory duties in relation to public transport. However, it still provides support for public transport in a number of ways including funding for Park & Ride, Dial-a-Ride and contributes towards other forms of community based transport. The Winchester Town Forum also provides financial support for evening buses on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to parts of the Winchester Town area. In addition, the City Council has a role to play in helping to promote the use of public transport.

Officers have carefully considered all the recommendations of the ISG and have developed them where feasible to do so, whilst seeking to avoid duplicating guidance or strategies which already exist for Winchester and across the wider the County. The most effective role for City Council can often be to act as an information hub and to promote the use of public and community transport, in addition to working with other authorities, such as Hampshire County Council, to support the delivery of these services. The implementation of the recommendations in the ISG report reflects this.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the progress made to date in implementing the recommendations of the Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group and raises any issues with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

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1 Progress on Responses to the Recommendations

- 1.1 In 2013, the Public Transport Informal Scrutiny Group made a wide range of recommendations (a-o) on a variety of issues relating to public transport. This report is a 12 month review of progress which has been made on the recommendations.

2 **Recommendations: That the Assistant Director of Built Environment (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Built Environment) consider:**

Recommendation a) The potential to work with the Community Groups and the County Council in developing and promoting community and public transport schemes and information provision. New mechanisms would need to be set up if improvements in this area are to be achieved. It has been suggested that transport workshops could be held in different parts of the District to improve such communications and involvement.

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council (HCC) runs a Passenger Transport Forum twice a year which City Council officers attend. This Forum has strong community engagement. County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils, Community Groups, and public transport providers are all invited. This Forum feeds into HCC policy for public transport provision. Officers are therefore keen to avoid duplicating existing work carried by HCC as the transport authority.
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/passengertransport/communitytransport/transportforums.htm>
- 2.2 Furthermore, HCC run a 'Parish Engagement Day' once a year and signpost the public to all of their information which is on their website <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/passengertransport.htm>. The 'My Journey' website also includes a travel planning tool:-
<http://www.myjourneyhampshire.com>
- 2.3 It is therefore considered that the best course of action for Winchester City Council would be to continue to support the Passenger Transport Forum to feed in ideas from the City Council.

2.4 However, in addition to this, the City Council has created a new webpage detailing all aspects of public transport in the Winchester District (Public & Community Transport) and website links to the operators that run services across the area and beyond. This is a new initiative for the City Council which is designed to provide a 'one stop shop' webpage for public transport information.
<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/roads-highways/public-community-transport/>

2.5 The City Council does support other transport initiatives around the District. It financially supports Shopmobility, and (with the County Council) Dial-a-Ride. The City Council also helps to fund other transport initiatives such as the Denmead shopper.

3 **Recommendation b) The merit in developing a public transport strategy for the District, as advocated by WinACC. A Cycling strategy recently adopted by the City Council provides a good framework for how this could be done. It would require sufficient resources in order to develop a sound strategy that could gain the support of the County Council, as Transport Authority, and other key stakeholders. As part of this process, Members and officers will need to consider if a step change in the City Council's approach to parking management as suggested by the Friends of the Earth would be the right approach for Winchester.**

3.1 The merit in developing a public transport strategy has been carefully considered by officers, taking into account all the existing strategies and policies which exist, such as the Local Transport Plan, the District Transport Statement and the Winchester Town Access Plan. The proposal was also discussed with officers from Hampshire County Council.

3.2 There is no requirement to produce a public transport strategy as a tool for the County Council or the City Council alike. The type of information that would most likely be relevant for inclusion such as a strategy is already stated in the Local Transport Plan and associated improvements are listed in documents such as the District Transport Statement (which is a live document and is updated on the website by HCC annually). Such improvements include installing new bus shelters, upgrading bus stop facilities on particular routes, such as the no.69, and the deployment of journey planning kiosks in village centres such as Denmead and New Alresford. The statement can be found at:
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-planning/transport-statements.htm>

3.3 Furthermore, in relation to the southern part of the District, the Solent Transport Body has been set up and is comprised of Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (Solent LEP). This body covers the same area as the Solent LEP and the Transport for South Hampshire and Isle of Wight partnership. The

remit of the new local transport bodies will be to decide on major transport priorities between 2015 and 2019.

- 3.4 The northern area of the District is covered by the Enterprise M3 Local Transport Body which performs the same role as Solent Transport Body and is looking to agree, manage and oversee the delivery of a prioritised programme of transport schemes from 2015 onwards.
- 3.5 The City Council can and has attended meetings of these bodies and will also propose schemes which would benefit from securing investment through the funds allocated to the transport bodies which are of a strategic nature.
- 3.6 In addition, Transport for South Hampshire (now known as Solent Transport), a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils, and the Isle of Wight Council, which aims to improve transport for the South Hampshire and Isle of Wight area) published a 'Transport Delivery Plan' in 2012. (<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/tfsh/tfsh-what-tfsh-does/local-transport-plan3.htm>).
- 3.7 In relation to car parking, the City Council has recently reviewed the management of public parking and its approach is set out in the Parking Strategy adopted earlier in 2014 which covers the period between 2014 -2018. <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/parking/winchester-district-car-parking-strategy/>

The Strategy aims to provide a sufficient number of suitably located and managed car parking spaces to sustain the long term economic, social and environmental well being and explains how this will be achieved.

- 3.8 In light of the above, it is considered that there would be limited benefit in the City Council developing its own Public Transport Strategy, as these matters are most effectively covered at a wider and more strategic level, given that public transport services tend to operate across district boundaries and beyond. To some degree, this is also covered by existing strategies developed by HCC and other transport bodies. However, officers will be continue to continue to support Solent Transport, the Local Transport Boards and HCC in order to try to influence investment and other decisions and to contribute to the Public Transport Delivery Plan developed by TfSH. Furthermore, as detailed at 3.6 above, the Council now has an adopted Car Parking Strategy for the period 2014-2018 which need to be reviewed and refreshed in due course.

- 4 **Recommendation c) Maximising uptake of the opportunities provided by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which has provided valuable funding to support initiatives in the District to support public transport including both promotional activities and new infrastructure. Making the greatest possible use of this funding, and exploring new future funding opportunities, should be a key focus for the City Council. The new inter-operator and smart ticketing arrangements being developed in South Hampshire may provide benefits for the Winchester District and initiatives should be taken to ensure that such opportunities used to the fullest extent possible.**
- 4.1 The majority of projects submitted as part of the LSTF have already been completed. The rest of the funds were won against specific projects. As a result, there is no opportunity to secure additional LSTF funding for new capital schemes at this point, although this may change in the future. Initiatives that are aimed to increase the awareness and use of public transport through the LSTF include personal travel planning advice to households in northern Winchester; the My Journey website which advises the customers on all types of transport; and the development of travel plans for railway stations.
- 4.2 Other LSTF initiatives include:
- The Solent Travelcard has been re-launched as Solent Go. Solent Go is a smart card travel card that was introduced in summer 2014. Users are able to top up online, and purchase a wider range of tickets, including add-ons, such as ferry tickets.
 - Many Stagecoach buses around Winchester have had WiFi installed.
 - Next Stop announcements are also being investigated by Hampshire County Council.
- 4.3 Hampshire County Council has been working on a bid for the 2015/2016 LSTF revenue funding involving officers from the City Council. The previous round of funding related to capital projects which provided greater scope for the City Council to identify opportunities for transport improvements. Although the focus is not on the main Town area, the District will still stand to benefit from the rural Hampshire bid. This bid focuses on helping people living in the rural hinterland to travel into Winchester in order to access jobs and services, using sustainable options such as public and community transport. Part of this initiative would involve fitting some of the buses that run in Winchester with Audio Visual next stop announcements, and installing free Wi-Fi facilities for passengers at Winchester station. Opportunities will still exist to continue the My Journey marketing initiative delivered in Winchester through the Hampshire Sustainable Travel Towns.

- 4.4 Officers will continue be to look for funding in other areas, although these funding streams are usually organised through the County Council, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Transport Bodies.
- 5 **Recommendation d) Ensuring the Park and Ride service is used to high capacity, with additional stops in locations such as Kings School, and Oliver's Battery for services into and out of Winchester including rail commuters. Consideration could also be given to coming to an arrangement with Bluestar for park and ride tickets to be valid on their services after 21.00hrs which would benefit P & R passengers and help maintain Bluestar evening services, Such changes would need to be carefully assessed to determine their impact on the peak hour express services in and out of the town centre. This could be undertaken as part of a wider review of the Park and Ride, which will be necessary to determine how prospective new car park sites at Pitt Manor and Barton Farm could be incorporated into the services.**
- 5.1 A review of park & ride services aimed at meeting trains at the railway station took place, with a new timetable brought into operation in April 2012. The P&R buses were refigured to tie in with the four key early morning trains to London Waterloo. The evening buses were timed to meet with the evening fast trains back from London Waterloo.
- 5.2 Cabinet gave permission for park & ride to add an additional stop at Kings School in March 2011 (CAB2130 refers). This permission was given on the proviso that Hampshire County Council would devise a site-specific travel plan for their offices at that location, where training is provided for internal and external clients. There is a concern relating to school children using the P&R due to the loading times at each bus stop. School children need to buy a ticket from the driver, causing park & ride loading times to rapidly increase, reducing the reliability of the service timetable. There is a concern that a Kings School stop will add considerable time to the park and ride scheduled services. The City Council has a specified operating agreement in the park & ride contract to prevent commercial customers from using the Park & Ride buses.
- 5.3 Bluestar have been asked if they would consider coming to an arrangement with regard to P&R passengers using their buses after the park & ride buses terminate. However, it is doubtful that the park & ride contract would allow another bus company to ferry P&R passengers back to the car park due to the contract stating that the contracted P&R bus terminates after a certain time. It would be unfair to the current provider to allow P&R passengers to use alterative transport back to the P&R.
- 5.4 However, a comprehensive review of the Park and Ride service will be taking place in 2014/15 as part of the retendering process for the new contract in 2016. Routing (including stops), operating times and frequency of services will be considered at this point and this process is already under way, with user surveys completed and a drop in session

for Members held on 18th June 2014. Officers will continue with the Park & Ride review and the associated re-tendering of the bus contract.

- 6 **Recommendation e) That the County Council's scheme to focus public transport on areas of social need and accessibility to key services be cross checked with the City Council's own social deprivation information and networks.**
- 6.1 Hampshire County Council had 45% taken out of their budget after the 2011 bus subsidy review. This process takes place every four years and these financial constraints limit the number of routes they can run. When making decisions about service funding, HCC use a mix of stakeholder engagement, census data, accessibility software and journey and opinion surveys to aid decisions on bus subsidy funding. Bus services have to meet a value for money benchmark and priority is given to food shopping and health appointments if only essential travel can be met. Furthermore, HCC use the Mosaic database to measure how bus use matches the community profile, to help underpin an equalities impact assessment. Officers are satisfied therefore that HCC's decisions are informed by use of appropriate and relevant data.
- 6.2 HCC do not have a district split for commercial and contracted journeys as many services cross boundaries. However, across Hampshire 28% of bus journeys are subsidised and around 15% of passenger trips are subsidised. Therefore, across Hampshire some 72% of journeys are run commercially.
- 7 **Recommendation f) Giving greater focus to providing information to community groups on grants available for promoting services and on how to set up new community transport schemes. The Winchester Passenger Transport Forum provides a good platform from which to learn about such opportunities.**
- 7.1 HCC already have on their website a 'self-help kit' which provides guidance on setting up community transport initiatives. .
<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/passengertransport/transport-self-help-kit.htm>
- 7.2 The City Council will look to promote such initiatives via the new public and community transport webpage (see 2.5 above) which provides links to the County Council's website and its self-help kit. It is therefore considered that sufficient information already exists which explains how communities can explore options for developing new forms of transport.
- 8 **Recommendation g) Holding discussions with Winchester Area Community Action to ensure that all opportunities to join-up services are kept under review (for example between Age UK and Dial-a-Ride).**

8.1 WACA, HCC and WCC meet three times a year to review Dial-a-Ride and the community transport that they provide. Communications continue throughout the year as and when required. WACA promote their Dial-a-Ride service through a plethora of channels, using leaflets and talking to community groups, and information is also passed on by word of mouth. Adult Services and the Hospital will inform patients and customers of the opportunity to use Dial-a-Ride. Leaflets are left in many places that potential Dial-a-Ride users would frequent including the hospital and care homes. WACA also delivers talks to community groups and supported housing schemes to inform residents of the availability of Dial-a-Ride.

8.2 Winchester City Council officers will continue supporting Dial-a-Ride with HCC and WACA and in the delivery of other community transport schemes.

9 **Recommendations: That the Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing and Regulation Committee be requested to review:**

Recommendation h) Winchester's taxi fare structure and charges, as these are claimed to be the amongst the most expensive in the country, and the impact and effects this has on residents who live in rural areas who may have to make longer journeys by taxis.

9.1 The Informal Scrutiny Group had requested that Winchester Taxi fares be reviewed by the Licensing Committee. The Licensing Team took a report to the Licensing and Regulation Committee on 13 June 2013 (LR409 refers). The report can be found online: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/meetings/details/1225>. A fare review such as this is usually completed once a year, following consultation with taxi operators. It is planned that a review will be carried out again at the end of 2014, with any changes to have effect from April 2015.

9.2 However, the report explained that the City Council cannot control charges applied by private hire vehicles. In addition, the report noted that fares for Hackney carriages (taxis) was in line with a number of other Hampshire districts (Basingstoke & Deane and Hart) whilst being only slightly higher than the likes of New Forest, Eastleigh and East Hampshire.

10 **Recommendations: That the Portfolio Holder for Built Environment and the Assistant Director of Built Environment work with the County Council to ensure:**

Recommendation i) That, as part of the review of central Winchester's traffic system, consideration is given to how best to take full advantage of systems that bring benefits to buses (such as transponders triggering traffic signals) be considered.

- 10.1 The traffic management study is being carried out by HCC. Changes to the traffic system, such as a two-way working of Friarsgate, are being considered as part of this study, which may include benefits to buses. Currently, no traffic signals in Winchester are transponder based.
- 10.2 Transponders are located on the underside of the vehicle. Inside the transponder is an electrical coil which, when passed over a loop cable in the road, produces a change in the electrical field. This electrical change is specific to each transponder which lets the traffic signal controller know that the bus is nearby and action the traffic signals.
- 10.3 The latest version of these used in Hampshire is a product called Tagmaster, in which credit card size cards in the bus windscreen are read by roadside detectors which pass a demand to the traffic signal.
- 10.4 Being passive, transponders are unable to determine whether the bus is on time, earlier or late. Therefore blanket priority is given at traffic signals regardless of the bus punctuality. Most of the Winchester fleet of buses are equipped with transponders but there are currently no transponder-based traffic signals in Winchester. However, there are sites along the A3 corridor at Waterlooville, the A325 corridor in Farnborough and BRT route between Fareham and Gosport. Other forms of Selective Vehicle Detection include GPS-based Real Time Information on the buses themselves, which has the potential to tell whether a bus is running late, and profiling loops. Roadside surveys have also been used from time to time to monitor punctuality.
- 10.5 The only traffic signal junction with Selective Vehicle Detection in Winchester is at the Carfax junction. A profiling loop is located on the Station Hill approach. The profiling loop has a library of profiles which match those of buses. When a bus passes over the loop a change in the electrical field occurs when the library identifies it as a bus. Other vehicles passing over the loop produce different profiles which are ignored. In conclusion therefore, these types of initiative are primarily matters for HCC rather than the City Council.
- 11 **Recommendation j) That the County Council be asked if the proposed integrated ticketing service (the Solent Travel Card) could be extended to serve the Winchester District.**
- 11.1 The Solent Travel Card and now the Solent Go travel card already serve much of the Winchester District, including most of the larger settlements such as Twyford, Otterbourne, Hursley, Bishops Waltham, Wickham, Denmead and Whiteley. It does not however serve buses in New Alresford or to the north of the District such as Micheldever. The cards are an initiative of My Journey and Solent Transport (formally Transport for South Hampshire) and will be soon be extended to include ferry tickets

11.2 The Solent Go Travelcard is being promoted on the new webpage (see 2.4 above).

12 **Recommendation k) That, in light of the recent successful Local Sustainable Transport funding bid for the South Downs, discussions be held with HCC and the Parks Authority to see if the City Council can work jointly on transport schemes which could be of benefit to the Winchester District and the South Downs National Park.**

12.1 The LSTF National Park funding was won against specific projects so can only be used for these purposes. The projects involve:

- Improved routing and timetables
- Public Transport Maps
- Public Transport improvements at bus stops and stations
- Promotion of existing bus services
- Bus Walk Maps

12.2 These projects include the South Downs and New Forest National Parks. As part of this submission bid, the Parks have funding to employ two full time employees to deliver all of the projects. Inside Winchester District, monies from this fund have contributed to the new signage along the Hockley Viaduct cycle path.

12.3 Consequently, although the City Council is unable to specify how these funds are used, officers will nevertheless continue to attend and feed into LSTF workshops hosted by Hampshire County Council. However, if new sources of funding become available, City Council officers will look to work with other authorities, including the National Park Authority and HCC, to secure funding

13 **Recommendations: That the Portfolio Holder for Built Environment and the Assistant Director of Built Environment work with the public transport providers to:**

Recommendation I) Ensure that Winchester is marketed as a destination in their promotional materials and on their web sites.

13.1 Bluestar Bus already promotes Winchester as a destination on their website with information about bus tickets to and from the City. South West Trains have a Winchester destination guide on their website and a circular walking route from the train station. HCC's "Hampshire Now" magazine promotes circular walking routes around the rural Districts and includes bus information as part of this.

13.2 All of this information can now be found on the City Council's Public and Community Transport webpage. The Tourist Information Centre also promotes the use of public transport and park & ride in their promotional material and webpages where they include specific travel information regarding buses, Shopmobility and Bikeabout.,

- 14 **Investigate the possible role for Parish Councils, working closely with bus companies and the County Council, in helping update bus timetable information and in promoting the availability of bus and community services**
- 14.1 Most parish councils have a transport representative who attend the public transport workshops and update the information in their parishes. It is the responsibility of the bus company to update timetable information and promote their services in the rural areas. All timetable information is on the HCC website and Traveline.
- 15 **Recommendation m) Request that the bus companies be invited to re-examine their fare structures, particularly with regard to short journeys, such as Stanmore to Winchester town centre, which appear disproportionately expensive compared to other fare structures in other neighbouring areas.**
- 15.1 Fare structures are to some degree a subjective issue and one person's perception of what constitutes an expensive trip will be different to another's. Tickets are priced by the bus companies themselves. Single tickets are higher than pre-paid tickets which are discounted and therefore offer better value for money. There are many different discounted tickets already offered on the buses, such as the Solent Go Travel card. Weekly and monthly tickets are also discounted compared to a single ticket.
- 15.2 Single and return fares from Winchester include:
- Stanmore £1.95/£3.30
 - Winnall £1.25 /£2.10
 - Teg Down £1.95/£3.30
 - Weeke £1.95/£3.30
- 15.3 These prices are based on distance; hence a trip to Winnall is cheaper. A single bus ticket is cheaper than 2 hours parking in the City Centre. The Winchester Dayrider ticket is £4.00 and is accepted in the Winchester ticket zone (Appendix 1) which extends from Kings Worthy to Oliver's Battery and Winnall to Littleton. For shopping trips into town, the Dayrider is cheaper than 4 hour parking in the city centre.
- 15.4 Dayrider tickets in other parts of the County are similar in price; however, the price is affected by the distance of the ticket zone:
- Basingstoke Dayrider is £4.60
 - Havant Dayrider is £3.60
 - Portsmouth Dayrider is £4.00
- 15.5 In conclusion therefore, it does not appear that bus journeys in the District are particularly expensive and officers are not in a position to control commercial operators in terms of the fares they levy.

16 **Recommendation n) Address the need for better real-time passenger information provision across the whole of Winchester Town. Clarification is needed from the County Council as to when this will be happening and what areas and services that it will cover.**

- 16.1 The Real Time Information system is completed on some bus routes in Winchester. All buses are equipped and most of the bus stops have real time information displays. The stops that are not configured for RTI show the scheduled times. Traveline have an app for Smart phones which will inform users of the next bus to arrive at a particular bus stop. The public can also 'text for times'. www.travelinesw.com.
- 16.2 Hampshire County Council is also developing an app for real-time information. Major bus operators will also be supplying real-time feeds from their own systems to Traveline but a timescale for its completion has not yet been agreed. As and when these real-time feeds become available, WCC officers will publicise this on the public and community transport website.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

17 **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN (RELEVANCE TO):**

- 17.1 Many of the suggested recommendations would help to achieve Community Strategy objectives under High Quality Environment including effective traffic management and support for public transport provision.

18 **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 18.1 Some of the recommendations have been taken forward using existing staff resources and this will continue whilst others rely upon cooperation and commitment of resources by external bodies such Hampshire County Council and transport providers.

19 **RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 19.1 None

20 **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

- 20.1 None

21 **APPENDICES:**

- 21.1 Appendix 1: Winchester Bus Ticket Zone

Appendix 1

