



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 16th December 2021

SPECIAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY PANEL

12th October 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Furneaux (in the Chair)
Councillors Callison, Cairns, Dawkins, Harness, Hogan, Sheridan and Smith

Officers in attendance:

- Paul Windley (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Mark Nearney (Assistant Director of Housing, Planning and Highways)
- Jonathon Ford (Accessibility Officer, Highways and Transport)
- Paul Thorpe (Operations Director)
- Martin Lear (Principal Transport Officer)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Jackson (Leader of the Council)
- Councillor S. Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Neil Birch (Systra)

There was one member of the public and one press representative present.

SPE.29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence from this meeting.

SPE.30 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting

SPE.31 BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The panel considered a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport summarising the Government's National Bus Strategy and introducing a new North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan. This item was due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on

20th October, 2021 and was submitted to this panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

The panel raised the following issues:

- The involvement of Stagecoach in the Bus Service Improvement Plan

It was noted that the plan had been developed in partnership with Stagecoach and they had provided an assurance that they were willing to support delivery of the plan if it was approved. Stagecoach was also providing funding with regard to electric vehicles. In response to a query about driver shortages, it was reported that Stagecoach was running a driver training programme but there were currently difficulties with recruitment and with getting DVLA approval for licences.

- Location of the bus interchange in Grimsby town centre and anti-social behaviour issues.

Councillor S Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport, reported that options for a transportation hub were being considered as part of the Grimsby Town Centre Masterplan. It was noted that mobile CCTV units had been included in the plan and evidence from these units would be forwarded on to the police. An assurance was provided that these units would be compatible with the existing CCTV system. In addition, officers would continue to work closely with community safety colleagues.

- Park and Ride Proposals

Funding for a feasibility study for park and ride had been included in the plan. Doubts from the panel over its potential use in North East Lincolnshire, perhaps restricted to football matches, were noted.

- Reducing the cost of bus fares for young people

It was noted that consultation conducted earlier in the year had identified that residents wanted to see discounted fares for young people. It was hoped that options would be available from April 2022.

- 'Dial A Ride' services

It was suggested that organisations such as Dial A Ride and Phone A Ride could merge so that there was a more joined-up approach to such services. It was noted that the plan did include funding for a potential merger, but previous discussions had not been fruitful. It was agreed to provide a briefing note to panel members providing further information on feasibility discussions held so far.

- Europarc bus bridge and bus service

It was noted that funding had been included in the plan for both the bridge and the bus service to Europarc. This was in addition to the bid through the Levelling Up Fund for the bridge.

- Areas where bus services were not in operation

Concern was raised that from consultation responses it was clear that certain areas, such as Weelsby Road and some rural areas, were not receiving a satisfactory bus service. It was reported that the plan would develop, and it would be possible to look at demand responsive services. It was noted that this could be a matter for the Bus Quality Partnership to consider.

- Installation of panic buttons

It was felt that these would be particularly useful for women passengers and it was being looked at by some bus partnerships. It was something to be explored further.

In conclusion, the panel agreed with the proposed recommendations to Cabinet but suggested, with regard to recommendation 2a of the report, that should there be a reduced funding allocation awarded by the Department for Transport, the re-prioritised Bus Service Improvement Plan be referred back to this panel for consideration prior to approval by the Executive Director of Environment, Economy and Resources (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport).

RESOLVED – That a briefing note be circulated to members of this panel providing further information on feasibility discussions held so far with regard to potential merger of Dial A Ride and Phone A Ride services.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET –

That the recommendations in the report now submitted be agreed, subject to the following amendment to recommendation 2a:

That, should there be a reduced funding allocation awarded by the Department for Transport, the re-prioritised Bus Service Improvement Plan be referred to the Economy Scrutiny Panel for consideration prior to approval by the Executive Director of Environment, Economy and Resources (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport).

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.