

# NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**at 5.30 pm**

**in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:**

Councillors Akers-Belcher, R W Cook, Coward, Cranney, Flintoff, Gibbon, Griffin, Henery, Richardson, Simmons and Turner

Resident Representatives:

Ann Butterfield, Alan Lloyd and Linda Shields

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

**3. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February and 3 March 2008 (*To follow*)

**4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items.

**6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS/BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items.

**7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services  
Department Transport Provision -**

7.1 Social Enterprise – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

7.2 Draft Final Report - *Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum*

**8. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

**9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of next meeting Wednesday 18 June 2008 at 4.00 pm – venue to be confirmed**

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

27 February 2008

The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Officers: Amanda Whitaker, Democratic Services Team Manager

### **73. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Akers-Belcher, Rob W Cook, John Coward, Kevin Cranney, Bob Flintoff, Steve Gibbon, Sheila Griffin, Gordon Henery, Carl Richardson, Chris Simmons and Mike Turner and Resident Representatives Ann Butterfield, Alan Lloyd and Linda Shields.

### **74. Inquorate Meeting**

In the absence of a quorum the meeting was adjourned. The Chairman had determined that the meeting be reconvened at 5.30 pm on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008.

Monday 3 March 2008

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool

**Present:**

Councillor: Stephen Akers-Belcher (In the Chair)

Councillors: Rob W Cook, Kevin Cranney, Bob Flintoff, Steve Gibbon, Sheila Griffin, Chris Simmons and Mike Turner

Resident Representatives:

Ann Butterfield, Alan Lloyd and Linda Shields

Officers: Denise Ogden, Head of Environmental Management  
Sajda Banaras, Strategy Development Officer  
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager  
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **75. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gordon Henery and Carl Richardson.

## **76. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

## **77. Minutes**

None.

## **78. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum – Portfolio Holders Response to the School Meals Scrutiny Investigation – *(Joint Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities)***

The Scrutiny Support Officer introduced the report which provided Members with feedback on the recommendations from the investigation into 'School Meals' which was reported to Cabinet on 4 February 2008. Following consideration of the Final Report, Cabinet approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and the proposed actions to be taken following approval by Cabinet were provided in the Action Plan attached at Appendix A. Members were asked to note that a progress report on the outcomes from the Action Plan would be reported back to the Scrutiny Forum in six months' time.

The Chairman acknowledged that this had been a very thorough investigation and congratulated all the staff involved in the Catering Service for the excellent service they provide. The outcome of the investigation would be publicised in a future edition of the Council's quarterly publication Hartbeat magazine.

### **Decision**

The proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan were noted.

**79. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None.

**80. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Corporate Plan 2008/09: Proposed Outcomes and Actions** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services and Assistant Chief Executive)*

It was reported that at the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 18 January 2008 it was agreed that the Corporate Plan proposals be considered by each of the Scrutiny Forums which related to the Community Strategy themes under their remit. The comments/observations of each Forum would be fed back to the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to be held on 14 March 2008 and would be used to formulate the formal Scrutiny response to Cabinet on 28 April 2008.

The Head of Environmental Management and Strategy Development Officer were in attendance to present the report which provided Members with the opportunity to consider the proposed objectives and actions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan 2008/09.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:

- Clarification was sought on the level of impact allowing children to leave schools on a lunchtime had on the local area surrounding the school? The Head of Environmental Management indicated that some schools did keep children in over the lunchtime period and some operated a scheme where pupils needed written permission from their parents to enable them to leave the school site on a lunchtime. Members were also asked to note that the introduction of healthier options for school meals had impacted with additional pupils out of school on a lunchtime. There was a Fixed Penalty Scheme operated by the local authority which implemented fines for children over 11 for littering.
- A Member asked what recycling facilities were available for schools? The Head of Environmental Management indicated that the Building Schools for the Future programme would be an opportunity to examine the sustainability of waste management within schools. Some schools already undertook recycling of paper and cans, although the removal of vending machines in schools had reduced the need for can recycling. Work was currently being undertaken to introduce a pilot scheme to recycle food waste produced within schools.

**Decision**

That the proposed objectives and actions for inclusion in the 2008/09 Corporate Plan as attached at Appendix A, be supported.

# **81. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Kerbside Recycling Collection Service – Six Monthly Update** *(Head of Environmental Management)*

The Head of Environmental Management presented a report which provided Members with an update on the progress made in relation to the Kerbside Recycling Collection Service since this issue was last reported to the Forum on 4 July 2007. Members were provided with update on the current contract position which had resulted in a 28 month contract being awarded to Abitibi Recycling commencing on 15 October 2007. It was noted that although Members had expressed a view that the service be provided by the in-house team, the set up and ongoing revenue costs did not make this a viable option although this would continue to be considered over the length of this contract. A number of issues had been raised at the meeting in July by Members from complaints they had received from members of the public. The Head of Environmental Management provided details of how a number of these issues had been addressed including a comprehensive review of the training programme and the promotion of the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Education programme including media campaigns. It was highlighted that the funding of educational materials had been mainstreamed within the government grant settlement. The use of alternative receptacles continued to be investigated as well as options to include additional recycling materials to the Kerbside Collection Service. It was reported that the bring centre service was being procured in partnership with other Tees Valley Authorities and should improve provision across the town through the rationalisation of the service across the town.

Members were asked to note that Hartlepool was currently in the top five performing Local Authorities for all waste management targets with the exception of recycled waste. However, this was anticipated to change due to the implementation of alternate weekly collections. The recycling performance had increased from 15.24% to 32.33% since the introduction of alternate weekly collections with Government targets being increased to 45% by 2015.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:

- A number of Members indicated that although there had been a marked improvement with the collection of recyclable waste, some problems remained with an increase in litter once the recycling collection had been undertaken. The Head of Environmental Management commented that this may be due to the contents of the blue boxes being emptied into a second receptacle to be transferred to the recycling wagon to ensure residents received their own box back. However, this had appeared to result in excess litter being left which was not acceptable and would be investigated.
- There was an issue reported of the road and pavement sweepers being in an area on the day before the recycling collection was due. The Head of

Environmental Management indicated that was an operational issue and should not occur and it would be looked into.

- Clarification was sought on any progress in relation to the collection of recyclable food waste. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that the Government had extremely strict guidelines on the collection of food waste due to new control measures put in place to stop the spread of infectious diseases, such as foot and mouth. Work was being undertaken with a waste disposal company to facilitate the collection and safe incineration of food waste.
- How robust the blue boxes were was questioned as a Member had a number of boxes which had cracked. The Head of Environmental Manager indicated that this problem had not been highlighted before but it would be looked into.
- An issue was reported by a Member whereby the contents of a white recycling bag had not been collected due to 'contamination'. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that contamination across different recyclable materials was an issue, but if there was one item in a receptacle that should not be included, this should be removed enabling the remainder of the contents to be recycled. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that this issue was partly due to the need to educate users about what can and cannot be recycled. When recyclable waste was 'contaminated' a leaflet could then be posted to the occupant of the property explaining why this item had been left and how different items could be recycled.
- Clarification was sought on whether the scheme to enable residents to claim recyclable food waste back for their gardens would be available again this year. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that the scheme was so successful this year, it was being relocated to the Summerhill site on Catcote Road and would take place in a few weeks time.
- A Member sought clarification on who was the lead authority for the procurement of the bring centres across the Tees Valley. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that this was being co-ordinated through the Joint Strategy Unit with the involvement of the Recycling Officers from all five local authorities.
- It was suggested by Members that the issue of recycling should be reviewed in six months' time to ascertain progress made. The Scrutiny Manager indicated that if Members still considered this an issue, it could be included for consideration within the Work Programme for 2008/09.

## Decision

The report was noted.

**82. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents – Progress Report – Scrutiny Investigation into Public Convenience Provision in Hartlepool Scrutiny Referral – Action Plan** *(Director of Neighbourhood Services)*

The Head of Environmental Management presented a report which provided Members with an update on progress made in relation to the Public Convenience Provision in Hartlepool. Progress on this issue had been reported to Cabinet on 22 January 2008 and a detailed and updated Action Plan was attached at Appendix A. Members views were sought in particular on the timing of the upgrading of the facilities at Seaton Bus Station and whether this should wait until after the summer holiday season. The Head of Environmental Management commented that in addition to this Forum, Ward Councillors from Seaton were also being consulted for their views, prior to works beginning on the upgrading of facilities at Seaton Bus Station.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:

- Members felt that the improvements to be made to the public convenience provision across the town should be more widely publicised as it was a concern regularly raised by residents.
- There was concern among Members about the lack of facilities on the Headland. The Head of Environmental Management commented that although the new facilities on the Town Square had suffered a number of problems with anti-social behaviour they should remain open during the daytime and would look into this issue. Members were asked to note that as part of Phase 2 of this programme, the level of public convenience provision in tourist areas of the town would be examined in more detail.
- A Member sought clarification on whether the facilities at Seaton Bus Station would have attendants. The Head of Environmental Management indicated that attendants would remain until the refurbishment was complete, however, once the refurbishment had been completed then an attendant presence would cease. Members recognised that the closure of this facility during the summer months would impact on visitors to Seaton and therefore suggested that the closure and refurbishment of this facility be delayed until September/October 2008 with only essential maintenance being carried out before then.
- It was noted that new facilities at the Newburn Bridge site were proposed and the Head of Environmental Management informed Members that this scheme was in the early stages of development and officers were currently working with Northumbrian Water Authority.



**Decision**

- (i) The progress in relation to the delivery of the Action Plan was noted.
- (ii) That essential maintenance be undertaken at the Seaton Carew Bus Station facility as indicated in the Action Plan with the closure and refurbishment of the public conveniences on this site to be commenced in September/October 2008.

CHAIRMAN

## NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

27 March 2008



**Report of:** Scrutiny Support Officer

**Subject:** TRANSPORTATION LINKS TO HOSPITAL  
SERVICES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT TRANSPORT PROVISION – SOCIAL  
ENTERPRISE

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members of this Forum with background information relating to Social Enterprise as part of their investigation into 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision'

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the Informal Meeting of this Forum on 3 March 2008 a request was made for information to be presented to this Forum relating to Social Enterprise and its importance within the current investigation into 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision'.

- 2.2 The Social Enterprise Coalition defines Social Enterprises as:-

*"Profit-making businesses set up to tackle a social or environmental need. Many commercial businesses would consider themselves to have social objectives, but social enterprises are distinctive because their social or environmental purpose is central to what they do. Rather than maximising shareholder value their main aim is to generate profit to further their social and environmental goals."*

- 2.2 Verbal evidence from the Hartlepool Voluntary Development Association (HVDA) is that there are currently very little social enterprise schemes relating to transportation services operating in Hartlepool. However, should the opportunity arise for the development of a social enterprise scheme, the HDVA feel that their members would be interested and able to respond.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 That Members of the Forum note the content of the report.

**Contact Officer:-** James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer  
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy  
Hartlepool Borough Council  
Tel: 01429 523647  
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

<http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk>

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**27 March 2008**



**Report of:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum

**Subject:** TRANSPORTATION LINKS TO HOSPITAL  
SERVICES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
TRANSPORT PROVISION – FINAL REPORT

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present the findings of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Transport Provision.

### **2. SETTING THE SCENE**

- 2.1 The issue of 'Transportation Links to a New Hospital Site' is a mandatory referral from Full Council. On 13 March 2007 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee considered this issue and referred it to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum for consideration during the 2007/08 Municipal Year.
- 2.2 In addition, during a meeting between the Chair of this Forum, the Mayor (as Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability), the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities, and the Director of Neighbourhood Services, the issue of 'Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision' was suggested as a topic for this Forum's work programme. In addition, it was suggested that this topic could complement the Transportation Links to a New Hospital Site Scrutiny referral if these investigations were conducted together.
- 2.3 Subsequently, at the meeting of this Forum on 13 June 2007 Members determined their Work Programme for the 2007/08 Municipal Year. The topic of 'Transportation Links to a New Hospital Site and Neighbourhood Services Transport Provision' was selected as the second Scrutiny topic for consideration during the current Municipal Year. Furthermore, Members suggested that this investigation should form the major in-depth Scrutiny Inquiry for the Forum's 2007/08 work programme. Members also suggested that the Scrutiny topic should consider issues around transportation links to

existing hospital sites outside of the town. Consequently, the title for the investigation reflects the broader issue of transportation to hospital services.

- 2.4 The motion agreed at the Extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 8 February 2007, which includes the basis of the referral to Scrutiny, is included below as a background to this issue:-

*"That the Council joins the Labour Group in deploring the decision of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel in respect of University Hospital Hartlepool and to totally condemn the broken promises of the Blair Government. We demand that this decision be urgently reconsidered so that those promises, made by both the Prime Minister and the former Health Secretary John Reid, can be delivered in full.*

*Furthermore the Council reaffirm its commitment to health services that are accessible, accountable and of the highest quality in Hartlepool, for Hartlepool. It is vital that we resist any further migration of both jobs and services out of the town to Stockton and fight any downgrading of services at University Hospital Hartlepool.*

*Health services in Hartlepool must be both maintained and indeed improved. We need increased funding, better transport links, improved primary care in our communities, an immediate development of new and equipped health centres and improved terms and conditions for all health sector workers in the town. We must seek a full and comprehensive understanding of the NHS proposals for Hartlepool and a timetable for its investment programs.*

*The Council therefore resolve that the full powers of this Council's scrutiny process be employed to deal with these issues and that the Scrutiny Coordinating Committee urgently set out a timetable for investigation, reporting back to Council at the earliest opportunity."*

- 2.5 Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum may wish to be mindful that in light of a presentation on the 30 August 2007 from the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's Director of Strategic Service Development on *Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare*, Members of the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum agreed to defer their investigation into Acute Primary and Community Health Services in Hartlepool. The Adult and Community Services and Health Scrutiny Forum made this decision on the basis that work being carried out in relation to this issue was in its early formation and agreed on 23 October 2007 to be provided with updates on key milestones/projects in relation to the developments with *Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare*.
- 2.6 The issue of Transportation Links to a New Hospital Site has arisen largely from the Secretary of State for Health's decision to support the findings of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) in its report on 'Advice on Proposals for Changes to Maternity and Paediatric Services in North Tees and Hartlepool'. The IRP report was submitted to the Secretary of State for Health

on 18 December 2006 and Recommendation Three, in particular, has relevance to this investigation:-

*“A modern hospital to replace the existing out of date hospital buildings should be provided on a new site in a well-situated location accessible to the people of Hartlepool, Stockton-on-Tees, Easington and Sedgfield.”*

- 2.7 The IRP report moves on to give direct consideration to the issue of ‘transport’ specifically and the paragraphs below are a complete extract from the transport section of the IRP’s report:-

*“Widespread concern was expressed to us about transport difficulties between hospital sites - for patients, carers, families and friends. With the changes due to take place in December 2006, concerning emergency surgery and critical care, it is clear that good transport links between the two hospital sites are about to become even more important. The road network throughout the area is generally good but, as has been stated previously, there is a high dependency on public transport.*

*A large amount of work on developing public transport links has already been undertaken by the combined Trust and local authority transport group and two initiatives to provide additional bus services are in place. However, if consultant led maternity and paediatric services are to be centralised at University Hospital of North Tees (UHNT), it is vital that all communities are able to access them. Initiatives to improve access to UHNT from Hartlepool, Easington and Sedgfield are urgent and essential. This requirement will, in due course, also apply for gaining access to the new hospital.*

*The co-operation of the local ambulance service will be equally essential. The Panel was reassured to hear in discussions with representatives of the North East Ambulance Service that, with their early involvement in planning discussions, all reasonable requirements could be met.*

#### *IRP Recommendation Seven*

*New initiatives supported by the NHS and local authorities are required to meet the transport needs of patients, carers and staff between University Hospital of Hartlepool (UHH) and UHNT and the communities they serve. The North East Ambulance Service should be involved at an early stage in discussions about all changes to patient services.”*

- 2.8 According to information received from the Department of Health a programme team from the North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust, under the title of *Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare*, is working closely with local Primary Care Trusts to move work forward on the new hospital. This work aims to engage with a range of local stakeholders to agree on a shared vision of how services will be and to begin the process of service development and design. It is recognised that good transport links are vital, and the team will be working with the lead agency for transport planning to ensure that services are in place when the new hospital is built. It is expected that the new hospital could be

complete by 2014. Initial meetings to begin the development and design phase of the programme are planned for early September 2007. It is worth noting that transport links to any new hospital site cannot be put in place until formal public consultation has taken place.

- 2.9 In addition, the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU) has been developing long-term proposals for our sub-regional transport network. These mainly focus on the economic and regenerative case for improving the sub-regional bus network. However, this could have benefits for access to hospital sites across the sub-region.
- 2.10 With anticipated future changes to the provision of health services in the region and increasing demands for travel between health care sites, the Strategic Health Authority, NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts and local authorities recognised the need to work together to develop a strategy to improve access to health care and develop sustainable transport services. This resulted in the formation of the Tees Health and Transport Partnership in 2003 that brings together all organisations interested, and having a role in, improving access to health care. The partnership is chaired by the Chief Engineer of Middlesbrough Borough Council and meets on a quarterly basis with annual workshops to identify problems, prioritise and deliver improvements and discuss progress. It includes representatives from the Strategic Health Authority, NHS Trusts, Primary Care Trusts, ambulance service, bus operators, Patient & Public Involvement (PPI) Forums, Sustrans, community transport providers, Tees Valley Rural Community Council and local authorities.
- 2.11 The partnership contributed to the 'Review of Acute Health on Teesside and Hartlepool' undertaken in 2005. This review identified access to health care facilities as one of the main concerns amongst patients and the wider public. Surveys indicated that people find it difficult to travel to hospital or their local clinic, miss appointments or do not seek medical care because of transport difficulties. The review recommended that the provision of services between the two hospitals at Hartlepool and North Tees should be reconfigured. The Partnership has assessed the transport implications of the proposed changes and fed these back into the review. The partnership has developed an action plan to deliver health improvements for the following themes:
- (a) Improving accessibility to health care facilities; and
  - (b) Encouraging more healthy and active lifestyles.
- 2.12 Alongside the referral of transportation links to a new hospital site Members of this Forum decided to take the issue of Neighbourhood Services transport provision as a complementary strand to the investigation. Currently the Neighbourhood Services Department exercises its responsibility across two strands of its work. These are:-

- (a) **Transportation and Traffic Section** – this is responsible for the management of the highway network and the co-ordination of all activities that take place on it. This includes delivery of the local transport plan, public transport, travel planning as well as highway maintenance, co-ordination of works on the highway, traffic management and parking.
- (b) **Transport Services** – this is made up of three elements: Community Transport, Vehicle Workshop and Vehicle Procurement. The main responsibilities of the section are for the maintenance and procurement of the Council vehicle fleet and the provision of special needs passenger transport. The main aims of the section are to ensure the Council's operational transport is appropriately managed and maintained, is operated safely in accordance with all legal obligations and that road risk is proactively managed.

2.13 Wherever possible, the section aims to create an integrated approach to vehicle usage, encompassing all departmental needs and trends, maximising resources and ensuring procurement efficiencies. In addition, the Authority has recently started the development of an Integrated Transport Unit (ITU). The purpose of the ITU is to integrate the three main areas of transport provision on an authority wide basis:

- (a) Vehicle Workshop – maintenance;
- (b) Procurement Unit; and
- (c) Community Transport.

### 3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 3.1 To gain an understanding of the issues around transportation links to hospital services and Neighbourhood Services Department transport provision and to seek to make recommendations for improvement in relation to this issue.

### 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation were agreed by the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 September 2007:-
  - (a) To identify who are the key stakeholders / service providers of transport links to hospital sites;
  - (b) To gain an understanding of the statutory and regulatory framework for transport links to hospital sites;



- (c) To identify provision in local strategies / planning documents of relevance to transportation links to hospital sites and Neighbourhood Services transport provision;
- (d) To explore the various planning exercises and work streams conducted under recent reviews of hospital services in the Tees Valley in relation to transportation links to hospital sites, in particular, the role and successes of the Tees Valley Health and Transport Partnership;
- (e) To seek the views of local bus operators, NHS organisations and neighbouring local authorities in relation to transportation links to current and future hospital sites;
- (f) To explore the issue of access to existing hospital sites outside of the town;
- (g) To establish what work, if any at this stage, has been undertaken to identify potential locations of the proposed new hospital site accessible to the people of Hartlepool, Stockton, Easington and Sedgefield;
- (h) To investigate what accessibility planning will be carried out in relation to potential hospital sites;
- (i) To explore what information is available to patients and relatives seeking to access hospital services;
- (j) To examine the Neighbourhood Service Department's current, and future plans in relation to, transportation provision;
- (k) To consider how the Authority and partner organisations can maximise the effectiveness of transportation links to existing, and new, hospital sites; and
- (l) To explore how the Forum can help and assist in the planning for the new hospital by identifying the transport issues that the future planning for the new hospital could, and should, consider.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

### **5.1 Membership of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum for the 2007/8 Municipal Year was as outlined below:-**

Councillors Akers-Belcher (Chair), R W Cook, Coward, Cranney, Flintoff (Vice Chair), Gibbon, Griffin, Henery, Richardson, Simmons, and Turner

Resident Representatives:

Ann Butterfield, Alan Lloyd and Linda Shields

## **6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

- 6.1 The Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from the 24 October 2007 to 27 March 2008 to discuss and receive evidence directly relating to their investigation into Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Transport Provision. A detailed record of these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services or via the Hartlepool Borough Council website.
- 6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-
- (a) Detailed reports from Hartlepool Borough Council Officers which was enhanced with verbal evidence;
  - (b) Evidence provided by the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities;
  - (c) Presentations and verbal evidence from representatives from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust;
  - (d) Verbal evidence from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum and Hartlepool Primary Care PPI Forum;
  - (e) Site visits by Members to experience transport issues that Hartlepool users may have trying to access hospital services at University Hospital of North Tees, University of Hospital of Hartlepool and/or James Cook University Hospital;
  - (f) Written and verbal evidence from the Tees Valley Health and Transport Partnership;
  - (g) Detailed presentation and verbal response from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit;
  - (h) Written and verbal evidence from the North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust (NEAS
  - (i) Verbal Evidence from the Town's Member of Parliament; and
  - (j) Focus Group held with the members of the public at the University Hospital of Hartlepool on 11 February 2008.

## **FINDINGS**

### **7. CURRENT TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN HARTLEPOOL**

- 7.1 In relation to the issues associated with the current transportation issues, Members received evidence from a variety of witnesses as outlined overleaf:

**Evidence from the Town's Member of Parliament (MP)**

- 7.2 The attendance and contribution of the Town's MP at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum held on 15 February 2008 was welcomed.
- 7.3 The Forum was informed by the MP that he felt very strongly that access to health services was one of the most important things for society. Whilst there was clearly a balance to be struck between regional and town-wide public transport provisions in meeting the needs of Hartlepool residents including visiting relatives and staff to and from the hospitals. His impression that people were dissatisfied with links, particularly bus links, between Hartlepool and other hospitals at North Tees and James Cook was that the scale of the problem was understated.
- 7.4 Whilst he had already had meetings with health chiefs together with raising the issue several times in Parliament, he stated that it was totally unacceptable that people made do and got lifts from family and friends to hospital if they didn't have access to a car and that it was inexcusable that people also in Hartlepool who used buses, had to change buses several times resulting in a couple of hours to get to hospital in a nearby town. Concerns were also expressed about how people visited patients in hospital, especially if they hadn't got a car and if they had several children accompanying them.
- 7.5 The MP was very keen to see services shaped around people's needs and encouraged the Council and NHS bodies to explore the idea about a more personalised service for example the use of environmentally friendly 'little green taxis' organised possibly by the Ambulance Service. Areas of good practice were suggested, those being Reading and Nottingham Councils.
- 7.6 In addition to the above, the MP felt strongly that there was a social element to public transport provision in the town and whilst the Government provided grants for the provision of non-profitable routes, thought should be given by the Council to using such funding to provide public transport through community transport schemes.
- 7.7 The issue of licenses to bus operators could also be provided on the proviso that a number of non-profitable routes were also serviced, together with incentives for bus operators such as bus sensitive traffic lights and real time information provided at bus stops.

**Evidence from the Authority's Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities.**

- 7.6 The Forum were pleased to receive information from the Authority's Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities their evidence relating to key transportation issues affecting residents of

Hartlepool accessing Hospital Services outside of the Town. These issues were detailed below:

- (a) Health Services in Inaccessible Locations – The creation of specialised units for secondary health care at North Tees and James Cook has resulted in the relocation of services and difficult access for patients and visitors who do not have access to a car.
- (b) Availability and Cost of Transport – Decline in the use of local bus services results in commercial services becoming unsustainable. Reduction in services reduces accessibility for people without access to a car, particularly those most at risk in disadvantaged areas. The cost of bus travel has continued to increase.
- (c) Personal Safety and Security – Perceived threats to personal safety and security can have a significant impact on accessibility by reducing the travel options available. This is a particular concern for young people, women, the elderly and the mobility impaired that were more likely to be without a car and rely on other modes of transport to access health care. People do not feel safe waiting at bus stops and travelling on buses, particularly at in the dark evenings.
- (d) Physical Accessibility for the Mobility Impaired – Frail and elderly people and people with disabilities experience problems in accessing healthcare facilities when travelling from areas with no direct services serving the destination. Difficulties at any one stage of the journey can make it difficult, if not impossible, to undertake.
- (e) Quality of Travel Information – Although information is published for all bus services in the borough, there are problems with its accessibility. People are unaware of what travel information exists and of where to access it. The lack of direct bus services results in an increased need for high quality information.
- (f) Changes to Hospital Services / Provision of Health Bus – In light of the recent changes proposed to Hospital Services by North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, the PCT, Foundation Trust and Council had agreed to fund the provision of a temporary bus service (Service No. H1). Commencing at the University Hospital of Hartlepool, stopping at two other pick up points in the town (York Road Central Library and Queens Meadow Business Park) providing direct access to the University Hospital of North Tees.

From 17 December 2007 to 1 January 2008, the service operated between the hours of 14:00 to 21:00 and from 2 January 2008 the service's operational times were increased to 9:00 to 21:00.

As a result of delays to the proposed changes to hospital services, the Portfolio Holder informed Members that Foundation Trust were to solely fund the service from April 2008 until the end of June 2008. Whilst user

patronage averaged near to 30 people a day, it was acknowledged that further publicity of the service was required to enable it to be fully utilised.

### **Evidence from Elected Members of the Scrutiny Forum – Public Transport to Hospital Sites**

- 7.7 Members of the Forum chose suitable public transport to travel from Hartlepool to either University of North Tees Hospital or James Cook University Hospital during 3 to 16 December 2007.
- 7.8 Feedback from Members can be summarised as follows:-
- (a) Bus shelters were uncovered and poorly lit;
  - (b) Journeys were uncomfortable;
  - (c) Timings of buses were not always convenient;
  - (d) Lack of timetable information available;
  - (e) Overall costs of journeys were felt to be quite expensive;
  - (f) No buses ran direct to the hospital sites with too many connecting services;
  - (g) Low-loader bus times were not always available for users who required such facility/service; and
  - (h) All journeys whether by train or bus or a mixture of both were felt to be quite lengthy.

### **Evidence from Hartlepool Primary Care and North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Forums**

- 7.9 Evidence was provided by members of the two PPI Forums to the Members relating to PPI members' experiences of transportation links. This evidence highlighted the need for any solutions or plans to be workable not only to Tees Valley residents, but also those currently accessing hospital services in Hartlepool from County Durham.
- 7.10 The local PPI Forums reported during this investigation that there was a lack of information not only available directly to patients, but reception staff in doctors' surgeries and hospitals were not able to provide any guidance or advice. Although it was acknowledged that Traveline the transport 'help-line' was available it proved to be expensive to use.

### **Evidence from Members of the Public – Focus Group Event**

7.11 The Forum was very keen to engage with members of the public to hear their views in relation to the current transportation links to hospital services as part of this investigation.

7.12 As such, a Focus Group Event was held on 11 February 2008 at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Whilst turnout was low, the event was well publicised in the local press, the Council's website together with the distribution of leaflets/posters to community groups and venues.

7.13 Members of the public were given the opportunity to provide their views on their experiences of current and future transportation links to hospital services. The issues raised at the event were as summarised below:-

(c) Experiences of transportation links to Hospital Services:-

- (i) Transport links to University Hospital of Hartlepool were good but very poor to the University Hospital of North Tees and James Cook University Hospital;
- (ii) Traffic congestion was a major issue in accessing James Cook University Hospital; and
- (iii) Journey times were too long, examples includes a one hour journey to Stockton, before needing a connecting service to North Tees and a six hour journey from Hartlepool to James Cook University Hospital for a 20 minute appointment.

(d) Current transport barriers affecting access to hospital services:-

- (i) Length of time of travel;
- (ii) Lack of information available on public transport services;
- (iii) Car parking charges at hospital sites were prohibitive, in addition to the lack of spaces;
- (iv) Bus provision after 7.00 pm was restrictive; and
- (v) Congestion of traffic at junction of the A19 motorway.

(e) Solutions for now and any future new hospital site:-

- (i) The location of the any new hospital should be at the hub of any co-ordinated transportation system;
- (ii) Utilisation of voluntary sector transport to help with linkages; and

- (iii) Direct and frequent bus services required to current and future hospital services for example at present there was no direct bus to James Cook and residents from Seaton Carew and the Headland had limited access to the current bus network.
- (f) Experiences of Neighbourhood Services transport provision:-
  - (i) No. 5 Service from the Headland to Jones Road (Doctors) no reverse route to allow access;
  - (ii) No. 12 Service ceased operating at 17.20 from the town and should be extended until 18:00;
  - (iii) No 6 Service is excellent both in frequency and availability; and
  - (iv) Some awareness of the Community Lynx Bus existence, although publicity could be improved. Service valuable where there is no bus service.
- (g) Changes to current transport provision not currently on offer within the community:
  - (i) More low access vehicles required;
  - (ii) Reinstate No. 1 Services from the Headland;
  - (iii) Public Transport information to be displayed in more public places ie hospitals, doctors surgeries and newsagents;
  - (iv) Larger typeface required for bus timetables;
  - (v) Suggested user of both 12 hour and 24 hour clocks on bus timetables as some users were confused by the 24 our clock;
  - (vi) Return tickets that would allow through ticketing where connecting services were required;
  - (vii) 24 hour bus services linked with taxis;
  - (viii) One bus that linked Hartlepool to North Tees and James Cook; and
  - (ix) More effective use of Council's vehicle fleet.
- (h) Health Bus – awareness, usage and comments:-
  - (i) Further publicity required as still too many people weren't aware of the Health Bus Service and that it was free;

- (ii) No timetables were visible at bus stops near University Hospital of North Tees;
- (iii) Access was limited due to limited pick-up points;
- (iv) Service very well received by those that had used it and couldn't do without it;
- (v) Pick-up point at Brenda Road requested; and
- (vi) Driver was always very pleasant and helpful.

## **8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO TRANSPORT PROVISION**

- 8.1 Members agreed that a number of important stakeholders should be invited to provide evidence, in relation to the Forum's investigation into transportation links to hospital services and Neighbourhood Services Department transport provision. The evidence of key stakeholders is outlined below.

### **Evidence from Hartlepool Borough Council**

- 8.2 Members heard that Hartlepool Borough Council's responsibilities were set out in the Transport Act 1985, 2000 & 2007 and are detailed as follows:-
- (a) To prepare the Local Transport Plan (LTP), containing policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities and services, to, from and within the Hartlepool area;
  - (b) Prepare a document known as the bus strategy containing general policies as to how best to carry out their functions, so that:
    - (i) bus services meet those transport requirements of people within their area which the authority considers should be met;
    - (ii) those bus services are provided to the required standards; and
    - (iii) appropriate additional facilities and services connected with bus services are provided (including bus waiting facilities, bus priority, bus service information, interchanges and integration) as the authority considers they should be.
  - (c) Provide travel concessions for the elderly and disabled on journeys on public passenger transport services



- 8.3 The Forum was also informed that Hartlepool Borough Council were also required to develop and deliver an Accessibility Strategy. Hartlepool's Accessibility Strategy is included as an integral part of the LTP. Improving Access to Health Care is a key priority of this strategy. Working in partnership with a wide range of bodies, including the health sector, is a key element of delivering the strategy.

### **Combined Evidence from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust and North Tees and Hartlepool PCT**

- 8.4 The Trust and PCT informed Members that it has a statutory obligation to ensure that accident and emergency transport provision is available to its hospital sites and this is part of any commissioning process for a new hospital. There is also an obligation for the Trust and PCT to ensure that a Patient Transport System is in place to access their sites, but this covers ambulances for relevant medical conditions and stops short of actual provision of transport solutions for general patients. Currently the majority of this provision is delivered by the NEAS.
- 8.5 In addition to the Patient Transport Services, the PCT informed the Forum that there was a Hospital Travel Cost Scheme, which provided financial assistance to patients who did not have a medical need for transport, but who required assistance in meeting the cost of travel according to a range of eligibility criteria.
- 8.6 This national scheme was set-up in 1988 for patients and their carers / escorts on low incomes or specific qualifying benefits/allowances and reimbursement is made in part or full for fares incurred in travelling to traditionally hospital-based NHS services under the care of a consultant, if their journey meets certain criteria.
- 8.7 Facilities are in place to make refunds of costs immediately and in cash on the day and at any time of the day. In addition a system of advance payments has existed for some time.
- 8.8 Members were informed that there were exceptions to the eligibility of such scheme, in particular visitors to patients in hospital who could not claim their travel costs through the scheme, although should the visitor receive one of the qualifying benefits they may be able to receive assistance in the form of a Social Fund loan, obtained from the Jobcentre Plus offices.
- 8.9 Whilst Members were extremely concerned that they were unaware of such scheme, it was felt that it was highly likely that the general public would also be unaware of its existence and this needed to be addressed with some urgency.

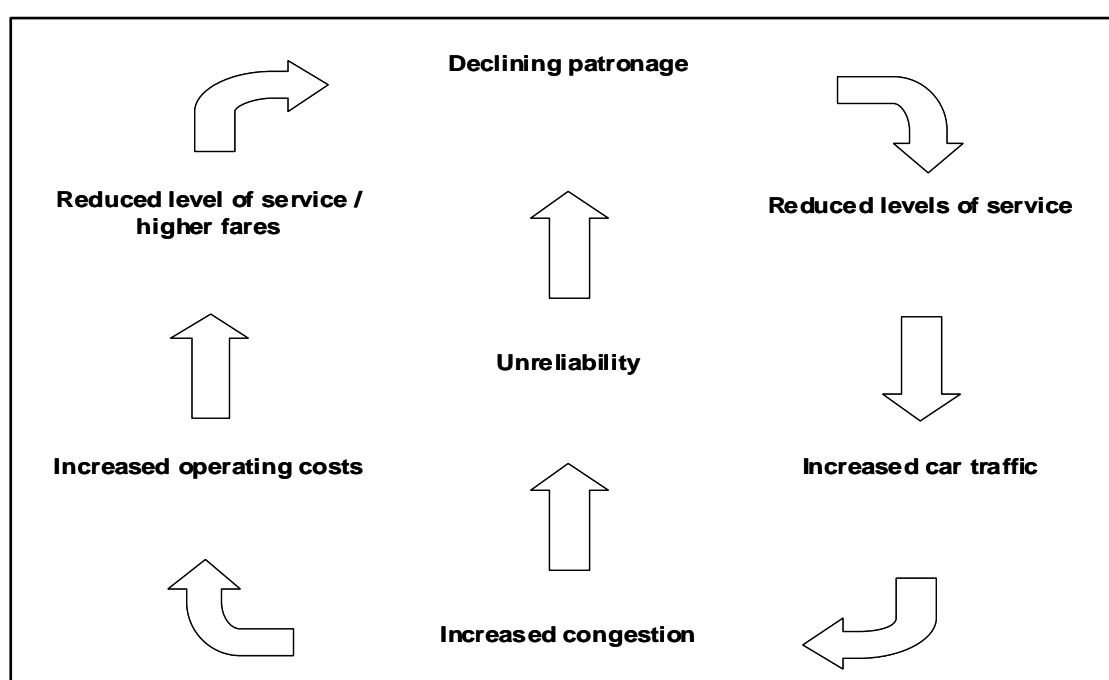
### Evidence from the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS)

- 8.10 The NEAS clarified to Members that their primary role was to care for patients in their own home or en route to relevant care providers. The NEAS did, however, advise Members that as a service they were more than happy to provide additional resources, so long as sufficient patient demand for these resources existed.

### Evidence from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (TVJSU)

- 8.11 The TVJSU provided evidence to Members relating to the Bus Network Improvements which were due to start in the Summer of 2008. This major development would ensure a co-ordinated approach to bus, heavy rail and any future Metro developments and ensure a synchrony between services that currently was not in existence. It was hoped that such developments would lead to users only requiring one ticket to get to their destination, no matter how many modes of public transport were required.
- 8.12 The Forum was also interested to hear from the TVJSU that electronic developments were planned, which would allow cashless ticketing through the use of mobile phones or the internet. New technology and a co-ordinated transportation network would enable 'front-line' hospital staff to issue patient appointments, along with detailed information for patients about accessing their appointments using the public transport network.
- 8.13 Members were interested in understanding how public transportation links had declined over the last 20 years due to a 'Circle of Decline' as outlined in Diagram 1 below:-

**Diagram 1 – Circle of Demand**



- 8.14 The TVJSU also provided evidence to Members in relation to the planned quality corridors that would enable 10 minute frequency connections to relevant community services, some of which maybe health related.

### **Evidence from the Tees Valley Health and Transport Partnership (TVH&TP)**

- 8.15 The TVH&TP advised Members that through their efforts members of the Partnership had gained a greater understanding of the issues facing transportation in the region after consultation with users, providers and relevant health authorities.
- 8.16 Since being formed in 2003 the TVH&TP advised Members that one of their achievements was the production of information sheets by the Partnership for users of the transportation network, with future developments including more understandable maps for users.

### **Evidence from Stagecoach**

- 8.17 Both the Commercial Manager and Operations Manager for Stagecoach informed that Forum that their organisation had no statutory or regulatory requirements to provide transportation links to hospital services. Current bus route services provided by Stagecoach within the town and further afield were those that were deemed to be commercially viable unless subsidised by the Council.
- 8.18 Whilst it was acknowledged that that there was no direct bus link from Hartlepool to the University Hospital of North Tees, Stagecoach did not envisage providing a similar service to that of the Health Bus (Service H1) based on its current average user patronage of 30 per a day, as it was felt to not be commercially viable. Whilst demand was felt to be fairly limited for such service, to enable such route to become commercially viable in the future there would be a need to meet a number of other demands such as people travelling to and from their place of work, school and shops.
- 8.19 The Commercial Manager also reassured Members that Stagecoach were working in partnership with the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit to maximise the effectiveness of transport links across the Sub-Region.
- 8.20 Members requested whether it was feasible for a number of bus routes within Hartlepool to hospital services to either be reinstated, diverted, frequency increased or operating times extended. The representatives of Stagecoach informed Members that a number of those routes would be re-examined as a result of their requests, however, consideration would need to be given to the impact on the existing network together with whether it was commercially viable.

## **9. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMMES**

- 9.1 Members requested evidence relating to the current developments in transportation links to hospital services and the current developments emanating from the Council's Neighbourhood Services Department. Such evidence is individually referenced as outlined below.

### **Evidence on Hartlepool Borough Council's Integrated Transport Unit (ITU)**

- 9.2 The Authority are currently working towards the development of an Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) by Autumn 2008, the unit will bring together all transport service planning, procurement, monitoring and management functions from across a range of service areas within the Council. Areas identified as suitable for inclusion are Local bus service coordination, information and travel planning currently located within the Transportation Team, Neighbourhood Services, mainstream school transport and special educational needs (SEN) school transport currently located within Children's Services, day centre transport and social care transport currently located within Adult and Community Services and operation of the Councils, vehicle fleet and workshops, including community transport, situated within Transport Services, Neighbourhood Services. Other areas of service provision that may be considered are taxi licensing, Transport safety and driver training.
- 9.3 Consideration for the development of the ITU will be done under three key phases, developmental; review the current framework of the authority for the provision of transport and determine areas suitable for transfer to the ITU, consultation; carry out consultation with all parties potentially effected by the establishment of an ITU and implementation; appoint an integrated transport unit manager, develop the ITU structure and implement the service.
- 9.4 The objectives of the ITU were highlighted to Members as follows:-
- (a) To provide a high quality, safe, and accessible transport service;
  - (b) To generate efficiencies through improved co-ordination of procurement and transport provision;
  - (c) To maximise the use of existing internal transport resources;
  - (d) To develop a flexible transport service that can respond to changing Government priorities and future needs; and
  - (e) To create a specialist team of transport professionals, providing advice and expertise across all directorates.

## Lynx Bus Evidence

- 9.5 The Forum heard evidence relating to the Community Lynx bus from the Authority's Neighbourhood Services Department. Members were informed that currently Hartlepool and Stockton Borough Councils work in partnership for the provision of the Community Lynx bus, a demand responsive service providing transport to those living in the rural areas of the Tees valley to health related facilities, such as hospitals, doctor, dentists, leisure centres and shopping.

## 10. TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

- 10.1 It became apparent during the investigation into the topic of 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Transport Provision' that information relating to the various transportation options was varied in relation to awareness and suitability.
- 10.2 The NEAS provided evidence to Members that information on their Patient Transport Services was available to users online and in some hospital wards. Members of the Forum questioned the NEAS about the publicity of the Patient Transport Services as many residents of the Town were unaware of its availability. The NEAS advised the Forum that distribution of the information relating to the Patient Transport Services was handled by the PCT.

## 11. FUTURE HOSPITAL SITE

- 11.1 Members were aware of plans for a new Hospital serving Hartlepool and North Tees from information received through North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's *Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare* programme. Members were given reassurances that as NHS funding provision was based on the number of patients receiving treatment, then any newly identified site needed to be as accessible as possible to users. Members could, therefore, assist the planning for any new hospital by highlighting transport issues, that if not addressed could lead to fewer patients receiving treatment and ergo less funding forthcoming from the NHS.
- 11.2 The Forum was informed by the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust that five sites had been identified for the location of any new hospital and Members would be consulted as part of *Momentum: Pathways to Healthcare programme*. However, the Trust revealed that one of the sites under consideration was at Wynyard and negotiations had already started with the owners of the proposed site at Wynyard to secure additional resources for transport provision at this site, if Wynyard was chosen as the preferred location for any new hospital.

- 11.3 After receiving evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities, Members agreed that it would be essential that detailed accessibility modelling is undertaken as an integral part of the process in identifying all potential hospital sites. Members of the Forum felt that the Authority should continue to work with its partners (health sector, local bus operators) to identify local needs and objectives, consider the full range of solutions and identify the most practical and beneficial options.
- 11.4 The NEAS highlighted to Members the need for sufficient involvement of the service in any planning of the future siting of any hospital. This notification and involvement at an early stage would enable the NEAS to ensure the relocation of ambulance resources where necessary. The Forum was advised that if an organisation such as the NEAS were commissioned to provide transportation services, then the NEAS on average would need a minimum of eight months to order and receive a vehicle and two years to train someone to operate as a paramedic.
- 11.5 The Authority's Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities supported the views of the NEAS, urging that early involvement of all relevant stakeholders in any development of a new hospital site.
- 11.6 The Authority's Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities gave evidence to Members that planning was vital in the creation of any new hospital site. Provision should be made for those users of hospital services without access to a car. This planning provision should include thoughts around a selection and accessible location or providing long-term financial support for appropriate bus services to make the site accessible.

## **12. CONCLUSIONS**

- 12.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-
- (a) That the issue of transportation links to hospital services and neighbourhood services transport provision was an on-going issue that would continue and develop beyond the scope of completion of this Forum's current investigation;
  - (b) That transport was a barrier to accessing healthcare as people either missed, turned down or simply choose not to seek healthcare because of transport problems;
  - (c) That whilst the perception was that the majority of people in Hartlepool used public transport to access hospital services, it was found that in reality private transport was most commonly used;
  - (d) That it was crucial that all key stakeholders were involved in the planning and location of any future hospital site that serves Hartlepool

and North Tees to ensure the current transportation barriers are addressed;

- (e) That Public Transport Schemes provided an essential service for patients and visitors in accessing healthcare, although sometimes it was felt that the use of public transport posed difficulties in itself, for example where public transport was infrequent, where the patient was required to change buses several times to reach the place of treatment or when an individual had health problems that made travelling on public transport difficult;
- (f) That NHS bodies, namely the local PCT, were required to work with the Council on the development of integrated transport strategies that ultimately provide a valuable and cost-efficient way for patients to access healthcare;
- (g) That there was clearly very limited awareness among the public with regard to the Department of Health's Hospital Travel Costs Scheme currently administered by North Tees and Hartlepool PCTs;
- (h) That the Council, namely the Neighbourhood Services Department and the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust be commended for their partnership approach to the provision of the Health Bus Service (H1) as a result of recent changes to hospital services;
- (i) That the provision of the temporary Health Bus Service (H1) was until the end of June 2008. Whilst patronage appeared to be low, it was acknowledged that such service was unlikely to be commercially viable in the future unless user patronage increased;
- (j) That the availability of information relating to the various public transportation options to healthcare services was varied in relation to awareness and suitability and this needed to be addressed;
- (k) That whilst the Integrated Transport Unit was in its early stages of development, significant cashable and non-cashable efficiencies relating to home to school transport, transport for adults, Dial a Ride Services, vehicle hire and procurement, staffing and administration could be made; and
- (l) That the use of Social Enterprise Schemes with the third sector together with the additional community transport schemes would support the progression of a fully Integrated Transport Unit.

## 13. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of

recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet / NHS bodies are as outlined below:

#### Hartlepool Borough Council

- (a) That consideration is given to extending the Authority's current concessionary travel scheme to cover free bus usage for carers accompanying disabled people;
- (b) That the Council works in partnership with neighbouring Local Authorities, the local PCTs and Foundation Trusts to produce a 'User's Guide for Transport to Healthcare' that provides useful information on public transport available to health care locations and concessionary care schemes available;
- (c) That the Council further promotes the use of established community transport schemes in operation locally, including maximising efficiencies through the proposed Integrated Transport Unit, to enable people who are unable to use, or have difficulty to access public transport;
- (d) That the Council explores opportunities to secure the long-term operation of the Health Bus Service, that currently operates between the University of Hartlepool and University Hospital of North Tees sites;
- (e) That the Council explores opportunities of developing a social enterprise scheme with the third sector to improve access to healthcare services;
- (f) That the current bus service timetable information provided in Hartlepool be further improved such as timetables at bus stops and travel information at healthcare sites;

#### Hartlepool PCT

- (g) That the Hartlepool PCT rolls out a communication programme that ensures all front line staff are made fully aware of the Hospital Travel Cost Scheme and how its is administered;
- (h) That the Hartlepool PCT ensures that the Hospital Travel Cost Scheme is more widely publicised to patients and the public with information on the scheme in particular the eligibility criteria being made readily available in a variety of locations;
- (i) That to ensure that the Hospital Travel Costs Scheme runs effectively together with easier access to healthcare premises, that Hartlepool PCT works with the Council in the identification and development of local and integrated transport strategies; and



North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

- (j) That the North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust works with Hartlepool Borough Council and affected neighbouring authorities in assessing the accessibility of any proposed new hospital site.

**14. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 14.1 The Forum is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of the Scrutiny Inquiry. We would like to place on record our appreciation for all those witnesses who attended the Forum. In particular the Forum would like to thank the following for their co-operation during the Scrutiny Investigation:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Councillor Peter Jackson – Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities.

Dave Stubbs – Director of Neighbourhood Services

Alastair Smith – Head of Technical Services

Paul Robson – Consultant: Integrated Transport Unit Manager

Mike Blair – Traffic and Transportation Manager

Jayne Brown – Transportation Services Manager

Ian Jopling – Transportation Team Leader

External Representatives:

Iain Wright, MP for Hartlepool

Ali Wilson – Deputy Director of Health Systems and Estates Development, Hartlepool PCT

Ek Bradwell – Estates Manager , Hartlepool PCT and North Tees PCT

Kevin Oxley – Director of Estates and Facilities, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Peter Wilkinson – North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust Patient and Public (PPI) Forum

Jonathan Spruce – Senior Assistant Director, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit

Elaine Bennington – Assistant Director of Operations (Teesside), North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Brian Glover – Chair of the Tees Valley Health and Transportation Partnership

Doug Elphee, Commercial Manager, Stagecoach North East

Paul Livesey, Operations Manager, Stagecoach in Hartlepool

Members of the public who participated throughout the investigation and the Focus Group Event held on 11 February 2008

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN AKERS-BELCHER  
CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in preparation of this report:-

- (a) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Scoping Paper' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 September 2007.
- (b) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Verbal Evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Communities – Covering Report' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 24 October 2007.
- (c) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport

Provision – Evidence from the Neighbourhood Services Department – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 24 October 2007.

- (d) Presentation of the Head of Technical Services entitled ‘Integrated Transport Unit’ delivered to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 24 October 2007.
- (e) Presentation of the Transport Team Leader entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services’ delivered to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 24 October 2007.
- (f) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 November 2007.
- (g) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from North Tees and Hartlepool PCT – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 November 2007.
- (h) Joint Presentation of North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust and Hartlepool PCT entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services’ delivered to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 November 2007.
- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from the Local Public and Patient Involvement Forums – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 28 November 2007.
- (j) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 9 January 2008.
- (k) Presentation of the Senior Assistant Director of the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit entitled ‘Tees Valley Bus Network’ delivered to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 9 January 2008.
- (l) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled ‘Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from the Tees Valley Health and Transportation Partnership – Covering Report’ presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 9 January 2008.

- (m) Mission Statement and Terms of Reference of the Tees Valley Health and Transport Partnership.
- (n) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from the North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust – Covering Report' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 9 January 2008.
- (o) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Public Transport to Hospital Sites – Feedback from Members who undertook Journey(s) between 3 and 16 December 2007' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 9 January 2008.
- (p) Documented Issues Arising from the Focus Group Session held with the general public on 11 February 2008.
- (q) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Supporting Access to Services' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (r) Presentation of the Hartlepool PCT and North Tees PCT entitled 'Supporting Access to Services' delivered to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (s) Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services entitled 'Bus Service – University Hospital of Hartlepool to the University Hospital of North Tees' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (t) Report of the Consultant: Integrated Transport Unit Manager entitled 'Proposed Integrated Transport Unit (Forming part of the Restructure within the Directorate of Neighbourhood Services)' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (u) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Feedback from Focus Group' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (v) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from Stagecoach – Covering Report' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.
- (w) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Transportation Links to Hospital Services and Neighbourhood Services Department Transport Provision – Evidence from Iain Wright MP – Covering Report' presented to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 15 February 2008.

- (x) Department of Health Guidance for NHS Organisations – November 2007 entitled ‘Hospital Travel Costs Scheme’.
- (y) NHS document entitled ‘Ref HC11 – Help with Health Costs: Effective from 1 July 2007’.
- (z) Minutes of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of 19 September 2007, 24 October 2007, 28 November 2007, 9 January 2008, 15 February 2008, 27 February 2008 and 27 March 2008.