

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Friday 11th November, 2005

at 1.00 p.m.

in Committee Room “B”

MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Cambridge, Cook, Cranney, Fenwick, Flintoff, Hall, Lauderdale,
J Marshall, Richardson, Rogan and Tumilty.

Resident Representatives:

Allan Lloyd, Linda Shields and Steve Gibbon

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 14th October 2005 (*to follow*).

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision

(a) Evidence from Government Office North East (*Scrutiny Manager/Research Assistant*)

(b) Verbal Evidence/Presentation from Penny Marshall, Secretary of the Regional Bus Forum, Government Office North East

- 4.2 A General Guide to Public Transport Co-ordination Presentation
(*Acting Transport and Traffic Manager and Public Transport Co-Ordinator*)
- 4.3 Additional Work Programme Item – Re-directed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinated Committee (Referral from the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum):-
 - (a) Scoping Report – 20 mph Zones Outside of Schools (*Scrutiny Manager / Research Assistant*)

5. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

14th October 2005

Present:

Councillor: Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: John Cambridge, Rob Cook, Gerard Hall, Victor Tumilty

Also Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation

Resident Representatives:

Allan Lloyd, Linda Shields and Steve Gibbon

Officers:

Mike Blair, Acting Transportation and Traffic Manager
Ian Jopling, Transportation Team Leader
John Lewer, Public Transport Co-ordinator
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

11. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sandra Fenwick, John Lauderdale, John Marshall and Carl Richardson.

12. Declarations of interest by members

None.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2005 were confirmed.

14. Matters Arising

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the final report on the Civic Centre Capital Maintenance Programme for 2005/06 to 2007/8 was approved by the Scrutiny

Co-ordinating Committee and would be presented to Cabinet on 24th October 2005.

The Chairman indicated that item 10 of the minutes confirmed the impact that Scrutiny could have as Stagecoach had reinstated the service that had been withdrawn along Ryehill Gardens. A Member hoped that the same results could be achieved with regard to the bus service operating from Clavering to the Headland, especially due to the doctors' surgery relocation from West View to the Headland. The Scrutiny Manager indicated that this issue would be picked up during the forthcoming inquiry.

14. Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision – Evidence from the Authority's Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation (*Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation was invited to this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into the Bus Service Provision. There were questions detailed within the submitted report directed at the Portfolio Holder and the following summarises his responses.

- **Roles and Responsibilities** - The Council had a role to provide services that Stagecoach cannot, for example early morning services and services for school children and to ensure that what the public needed by way of public transport was provided. Also to provide timetable information and promote services whilst identifying any gaps in the service.

There were concerns raised regarding the provision of services where they were actually needed, along with the profitability of some routes. The Acting Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that situations change and that it may be worth re-looking at some routes that had been withdrawn as they may be more commercially viable now.

- **Responsibilities across Transport Policy, Social Transport Services and Highways** – To ensure standards were set and monitored and that services specifically for education and special needs were in place as well as the infrastructure to support these services.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the refurbishment of York Road was one area currently being progressed. This would include the provision of lay-bys and short-term parking provision.

- **Key Aims and Objectives of 2000 Transport Act** – The Council were currently working towards the aims and objectives by the creation of a bus strategy which would implement the second Transport Plan that was currently out to consultation, which included real time bus information.

A resident representative indicated that real time bus information was a LCD

display at each bus stop that linked to the buses. This would automatically adjust to display the estimated time of arrival of the bus at that destination.

- **Current bus infrastructure meeting needs of community** – The Portfolio Holder indicated that as buses were currently only operating on profitable routes, it was not adequate. He was concerned that people needed to either wait for a service or walk a distance to get a bus if the less profitable routes were withdrawn.

Members agreed that the public transport system should be for the benefit of the public and that the main concern should not be profitability.

- **Variety of needs met by current service routes** – The Portfolio Holder felt that these needs were not currently met by the service provided by the main commercial operator. However, this may only improve with more investment from the Council.

Members questioned whether some of the withdrawn routes should be re-examined to ascertain if they were more profitable due to new facilities being provided on that route new housing erected.

- **Availability of information, especially co-ordination of timetable changes** – An extensive range of local bus information was provided with the Bus Quality Partnership including a commitment by local operators to minimise timetable changes and collage changes to set times of the year.
- **Barriers for disabled people and vulnerable groups using buses** – The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that there were enormous barriers for disabled and vulnerable people using buses. However, the second Transport Plan should impact on this with the All Ability Forum being involved.
- **Cost of bus travel and ticket types** – The Portfolio Holder reported that with the rising fuel costs and the numbers of bus-users decreasing, cost was an issue. He did feel that the types of passes available, ie unlimited travel pass and weekly passes were of great value. However, he acknowledged that better services must be provided for 16-19 year olds to ensure safer travel.
- **Bus subsidies and concessionary fares** – As the costs increase and the numbers of bus-users decreases there may be the need to withdraw more services. However, the Council needs to examine whether it could make any further investment in these service.

The Portfolio Holder thanked members of the scrutiny forum for inviting him to pass on his views and felt that this inquiry would be a very useful one to the people of the town.

The Acting Traffic and Transportation Manager indicated that Stagecoach were a commercial service and that the emphasis should be on encouraging

people to use the bus services provided. It may be that in the short-term, the Council would have to look at supporting some of these services.

It was indicated that part of the scrutiny process would be to examine other authorities and how they dealt with these issues, and in this respect the Scrutiny Support Team were consulting Darlington Borough Council.

Decision

That the responses of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation be noted and used to assist this Committee in the formulation of its findings and subsequent recommendations when concluding this enquiry.

That the thanks of this Committee be conveyed to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation for the submission of evidence to this enquiry.

15. Any other items which the Chairman Considers Urgent – Project Plan for Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Local Bus Service Provision (*Scrutiny Manager*)

A project plan for the inquiry into Hartlepool's Local Bus Service Provision was submitted to the Forum. The Plan detailed the dates of the meetings during the inquiry, the witnesses to be invited to meetings and the particular areas to be examined during each meeting.

The Scrutiny Manager highlighted the meetings on 11th November and 9th December in particular as there were representatives from various organisations invited as well as Iain Wright, MP for Hartlepool. Regular meetings would also take place between the Scrutiny Manager, Mike Blair and Ian Jopling to monitor the progress of the inquiry.

Members felt that all the relevant areas of inquiry were covered within the project plan.

Decision

Members noted the project plan.

KEVIN CRANNEY

CHAIRMAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

11 November 2005



Report of: Scrutiny Manager / Research Assistant

Subject: Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision – Evidence from Government Office North East

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that a representative from Government Office North East who serves on the Regional Bus Forum has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 19 August 2005, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry/Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation.
- 2.2 Consequently, a representative from Government Office North East who serves on the Regional Bus Forum has been invited to attend this meeting to submit evidence of a regional/national perspective to the Forum.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with the representative from Government Office North East, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the following key questions:-
- a) What are your roles and responsibilities in relation to bus service provision within the region?
 - b) What do you believe are the key milestones for achieving this Council's vision for an improved transport network that would contribute to our longer-term vision within the Community Strategy?

- c) In attempting to meet transport needs more effectively, as one of the seven shared priorities for Local Government, in what ways would you suggested that we as an Authority:-
 - i) improve access;
 - ii) reduce problems of congestion;
 - iii) ensure better air quality; and
 - iv) improve road safety
- d) Nationally bus user patronage has increased, however, within the North East patronage is slowly declining. Can this be attributed to the following areas and what do you believe would allow us to improve such services:-
 - i) infrastructure and priority;
 - ii) service improvements;
 - iii) information and marketing;
 - iv) fares and ticketing;
 - v) interchange points;
 - vi) quality of vehicles; and
 - vii) accessibility
- e) As of 1 April 2006, the Government's concessionary fares scheme will be in operation:-
 - i) What guidance could you offer in preparation of its implementation?
 - ii) How might issues concerning funding be addressed? and
 - iii) How might concessionary fares extend to ensuring access to employment, education and healthcare outside of the Hartlepool district?
- f) In your experiences with other Local Authorities within the North East, what good practice exists and how may Hartlepool utilise this?
- g) What other advice are you able to offer that would afford us the opportunity to develop and improve our local bus service provision within Hartlepool?

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the representative from Government Office North East in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Joint Report of the Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision – Scoping Report' presented the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 August 2005.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

11 November 2005



Report of: Scrutiny Manager / Research Assistant

Subject: SCRUTINY TOPIC REFERRAL FROM SOUTH NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATIVE FORUM - '20 MPH SPEED LIMIT ZONES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOLS'

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To make proposals to the Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum of how to approach the topic referred from South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum '20 MPH Speed Limit Zones Outside of Schools' which was recently approved and re-directed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At a meeting of the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum held on 12 August 2005, it was resolved that the issue of 20 mph speed limit zones near schools that used to be in force be referred to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for further consideration (Minutes 28 refers).
- 2.2 At the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 30 September 2005 consideration was given to the appropriateness of undertaking a scrutiny investigation into the issue being referred.
- 2.3 Subsequently, Members agreed that in order to determine the appropriateness of such a review, further information should be received on the Department for Transport guidelines for introducing 20 mph limited together with the consideration of the road casualties statistics outside of schools and of the good practice from neighbouring local authorities at their meeting on 21 October 2005.
- 2.4 Following consideration of the additional information at the meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 21 October 2005, Members agreed that this was an area worthy of further investigation and subsequently agreed to re-direct the 'referral' to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum with a three month prescribed timescale for its completion.

3. SETTING THE SCENE

- 3.1 The responsibility for setting local speed limits lies with local authorities, so there is no way of knowing how many pupils risk walking or cycling to school on 40mph, 50mph or even 60mph roads. In addition to this, official statistics show that the proportion of children being driven to school has almost doubled over the past 20 years.
- 3.2 The first three 20 mph speed limits forming zones were implemented in Sheffield, Kingston upon Thames and Norwich, in January 1991. Since then, around 450 zones have been installed in the UK.
- 3.3 In Scotland, the Scottish Executive has provided funding to all local authorities for part-time 20mph zones around all schools. By the end of 2004, 845 zones were in place.
- 3.4 Findings from the Transport Research Laboratory into 20 mph zone pilot projects across England, Wales and Scotland, indicated that on average, speeds dropped by 9 mph, annual collision figures fell by 60% and the overall reduction in child casualties was 67%.
- 3.5 Over the recent weeks, Rift House Primary School has become the first in Hartlepool to be approved for the new £10,000 traffic-calming scheme, with a further two zones being explored for Clavering Primary School and Kingsley Primary School.

4. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 To establish the appropriateness of the enforcement of 20 mph Speed Limit Zones outside of schools within Hartlepool.

5. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 5.1 The following Terms of Reference for the review are proposed:-
 - a) To gain an understanding of the Government policy key areas relating to 20 mph Speed Limit Zones outside of schools;
 - b) To review the Authority's current procedure of determining the appropriateness of enforcing 20 mph Speed Limit Zones outside of schools;
 - c) To establish what traffic calming/road safety measures are already in place outside of schools within Hartlepool;
 - d) To consider the number of road casualties outside of schools within Hartlepool over the last 12 months;

- e) To establish the financial implications of enforcing 20 mph Speed Limit Zones and any other traffic calming measures outside of schools in Hartlepool;
- f) To seek the views of a sample of users and potential users of the zones in which the 20 mph Speed Limit could be enforced; and
- g) To compare the good practice of neighbouring local authorities in relation to determining the appropriateness of enforcing 20 mph Speed Limit Zones outside of schools.

6. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY/ SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

- 6.1 Members of the Forum can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny review.
- 6.2 The Forum can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations as follows:-
 - a) Hartlepool Borough Council's Cabinet Member with Portfolio Holder for Culture, Housing and Transportation
 - b) Hartlepool Borough Council's Traffic Team Leader
 - c) Ward Councillors
 - d) Representative from the Local Education Authority
 - e) Representative from one of the external agencies Hartlepool Borough Council work in partnership with to achieve its road safety objectives (Northern Region Road Safety Forum, Cleveland Casualty Reduction Group, Cleveland Safety Camera Partnership or the Traffic Liaison Group)
 - f) Local residents, School Crossing Wardens and parents of pupils from schools within Hartlepool.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process. Paragraph 6.1 details who the Forum could involve, however, thought will be given to the structure the Forum will take in order to encourage these views.

8. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 8.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken over a three month period, which may be changed at any stage:-

11 November 2005 – ‘Presentation of Scoping Report’

Formal meeting of the forum to determine terms of reference and sources of evidence for scrutiny inquiry.

Additional meeting to be arranged in November 2005 (?)

9 December 2005 – Evidence to be determined

Additional meeting to be arranged in December 2005 (?)

27 January 2006 – Consideration of Draft Final Report

10 February 2006 – Consideration of Final Report by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

27 February 2006 – Consideration of Final Report by Cabinet.

End of February 2006 – Copy of Final Report sent to the South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum for information purposes only.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members are recommended to agree the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum's remit of the 'Scrutiny Referral' as outlined earlier in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

- i) Hartlepool Borough Council (2005) Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (Provisional), Hartlepool Borough Council

- ii) Department for Transport (2000) Tomorrows Roads: Safer for Everyone, The Governments Road Safety Strategy and Casualty Reduction Targets for 2010, Department for Transport
- iii) Child Road Safety: Achieving the 2010 Target (2002) Department for Transport
- iv) Report of the Traffic Manager and Scrutiny Manager entitled '20 mph Speed Limit Zones Outside of Schools' to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 21st October 2005
- v) Report of the Scrutiny Manager entitled 'Scrutiny Topic Referral from South Neighbourhood Consultative Forum-'20 mph Speed Limit Zones Outside of Schools' to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on the 30th September 2005