

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Tuesday 28th February 2006

at 2.00 pm

in Committee Room B

MEMBERS: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

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 meeting held on 17th February 2006 (*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

ADDITIONAL MEETING – PLEASE NOTE

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

No Items

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision:-

7.1 Evidence from Stagecoach:-

- a) Covering Report- *Research Assistant*; and
- b) Verbal Evidence from Stagecoach

7.2 Focus Group Session with members of the public held on 15th February 2006:-

- c) Covering Report- *Research Assistant*; and
- d) Verbal feedback/findings from Members in attendance at the Focus Group session.

8. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Informal meeting of the Forum to be held on Monday 6th March 2006, commencing at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber, to discuss the content of the draft Final Report of the Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision**
- ii) **Date of Next Meeting - Friday 24th March 2006, commencing at 1.00pm in Committee Room B**

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

17th February 2006

Present:

Councillor: Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: John Cambridge, Bob Flintoff, Gerard Hall, John Lauderdale,
John Marshall, Carl Richardson and Victor Tumilty

Resident

Reps: Linda Shields and Steve Gibbon

Officers: Ian Jopling, Transportation Team Leader
John Lewer, Public Transport Co-ordinator
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Rebecca Redman, Research Assistant, Scrutiny
Joan Wilkins, Principal Democratic Services Officer

50. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rob Cook.

51. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

52. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2006

Confirmed.

53. Responses from the Council, the Executive to Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

54. Consideration of Request for Scrutiny Reviews Referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

55. Consideration of Progress Reports/Budget and Policy Framework Documents

No items.

56. Hartlepool Second Local Transport Plan (Head of Technical Services)

The Head of Technical Services submitted a report outlining the background to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and sought the Forums views on transport schemes and initiatives being considered for inclusion within the final Plan. Details of the proposed schemes were as follows:

- **Bus Priority** improvements on York Road and Victoria Road core bus corridors;
- Improvements to **Bus Infrastructure** including new stop bus shelters, poles and flags, timetable displays and raised kerbs at bus stops with priority on core bus route corridors (service 1,6 and 7);
- Improved public transport **Interchange** at York Road, Victoria Road and Hartlepool Railway Station;
- Creation of new or improved **Walking** and **Cycle Routes** in coastal, urban and rural areas;
- Continued support for **Travel Planning** at all schools and employers;
- **Local Safety Schemes** including Safer Routes to School, CCTV, street lighting and the Safer Streets Initiative with funding specifically allocated to Neighbourhood Action Plan areas;
- Provision of new or improved **Road Crossings** at justified locations;
- **Traffic Management** and parking improvements, including York Road core bus corridor;
- **Local Road Schemes** including A179/Holdforth Road, Hart Lane/Wiltshire Way, A179/West View Road, A689/Burn Road and Catcote Road/Oxford Road;
- **Miscellaneous** schemes including contribution to Shopmobility, expansion of road safety education and training, sustainable travel promotion and purchase of a new Dial-a-Ride vehicle; and
- **Structural Maintenance** of roads, footways and bridges.

Following a short presentation by the Transportation Team Leader Members raised the following issues:-

- i) **Responsibility for the provision of bus stop poles and funding for improvements to the public transport interchange?** It was confirmed that as a part of the transport infrastructure the Council had assumed responsibility for the provision of bus stop poles since the deregulation of bus services in 1985, despite there being no legal requirement to do so. In terms of the costs of improvements to the public transport interchange there was a contribution from the rail operator.

- ii) **York Road (Raby Road to Stockton Road - £1.8m Priority Bus Scheme).** It was confirmed that this was the next phase of the York Road improvement scheme.
- iii) **Road danger issues.** In response to a query as to whether measures to deal with these issues had been built in as part of the cycle network it was confirmed that this was really an issue of improving safety on the existing road network away from designated cycle tracks. Members were keen to see how this was progressed and highlighted problem with the use of cycle tracks by vehicles. It was felt that a mistake had been made when cycle tracks were installed and Members hoped that as part of improvements consideration could be given to the creation of a physical barrier to prevent vehicular access to cycle tracks. Officers accepted that mistakes had been made and indicated that they were learning from them.
- iv) **CCTV on buses.** In response to a query as to why the Council was paying to put CCTV onto buses owned by StageCoach, Officers emphasised the importance of partnership working. The provision of CCTV on buses was beneficial to both parties and by combining funding the Council and StageCoach could provide the service on twice as many buses. It was noted that different Councils adopted different approaches to this and that some i.e. Stockton provided 100% of funding.
- v) **The number of stops with raised curbs.** It was confirmed that about half of the towns stops in the main urban routes have dropped curbs with emphasis on core routes i.e. routes 6 and 1.

Additional Dial a Ride vehicle. Members requested that the contract for provision of an additional Dial a Ride vehicle include a requirement that the vehicle actually be on the road. The request stemmed from issues raised as part of the scrutiny inquiry into bus service provision in Hartlepool, in particular problems experienced by wheelchair users accessing transportation resulting in an increased reliance on taxi's and lifts. It was felt that possible links needed to be looked into between the Dial a Ride service and other community transport schemes to provide services on routes where it was not economically viable.

- vi) **Cars parking in bus stops.** In relation to this problem it was felt that Traffic Regulation Orders should be imposed and enforced and suggested that Enforcement Officers be put on buses. It was, however, recognised that this could be an unpopular course of action with complaints from local residents who have used stops as parking bays for a considerable period of time.
- vii) **The need for the provision of action alongside strategies.** In response to concerns that no matter what strategy was put in place the issue was the willingness of the bus company to provide services emphasis was placed upon the need for partnership working. Attention was also drawn to the Council responsibility to provide no economically viable services.

- viii) **Concern was expressed regarding the possible affect of the Victoria Harbour development on the traffic plans/infrastructure already in place.** Officer highlighted that Victoria Harbour was a 20-year development and that in addition to the contribution of large amounts of money the developer would be working closely with the Council on travel planning in order to prevent the establishment of a car culture. It was highlighted that the Planning Committee took these issues into consideration when the planning application was approved. Members felt that this was very important and identified the development at Bishop Cuthbert as a way not to proceed. It was also noted that StageCoach were very keen to go into Victoria Harbour and the developer in support of the early provision of an appropriate bus service.

Following consideration of the information provided Members thanked the Transportation Team Leader for his presentation.

Decision

The report was noted and the Forums comments taken on board.

57. Draft Bus Strategy Framework (Head of Technical Services)

The Head of Technical Services outlined the background to Hartlepool's current Bus Strategy and sought consideration of the updated draft Bus Strategy Framework.

Hartlepool's current bus strategy was included as part of Hartlepool's first Local Transport Plan (LTP) in 2001. As the strategy now required updating to respond to new Government guidance, etc. and a copy of the draft strategy was circulated for members' attention. The draft strategy was developed in partnership with local bus operators and other organisations through the Hartlepool Bus Quality Partnership and included the Council's vision, aims and objectives for improving bus services in Hartlepool.

With work ongoing on the development of the detail of the new strategy consultations were to be undertaken with stakeholders and the public before its submission in summer 2006 to the Culture, Housing and Transportation Portfolio Holder for approval. It was highlighted that the progression of the strategy had been delayed to enable the views of scrutiny to be taken on board and that when finalised the strategy would form an integral part of Hartlepool's second LTP.

During the course of consideration of the strategy Members raised the following issues:-

- i) Members' passion about the provision of services was highlighted and emphasis placed upon the need for the provision of important services whether they were economically viable or not. It was suggested that scrutiny should look at route/services to establish priorities for the Council to provide in the absence of a bus operators' service.

- ii) Concern regarding the use in the analysis of weaknesses regarding 'the stigma of bus travel associated with lower class members of the population'. Views were expressed both for and against the use of the term 'lower class' and Officers agreed that they would reword the sentence.

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58. Feedback from Site Visit with Stagecoach (Scrutiny Manager/Research Assistant)

The Scrutiny Manager reported that as part of the ongoing investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision Forums members took part in a site visit on the 13th February 2006 to experience a number of viable and non-viable routes operated by StageCoach.

Members who attended the visit fed back the following issues that had come to light:-

- i) Whilst a considerable amount of money had been spent on installing raised curbs there was a problem with parking in, and very close to, stops. It was suggested that a campaign should be run with the Hartlepool Mail, with the Council taking the lead on publicity and enforcement action taken wherever possible. Officers indicated that enforcement action was also being taken and highlighted the problem being experienced with residents who live nearby stops and have parked in them for a considerable time.
- ii) It was felt that problems with the adoption of roads in the Bishop Cuthbert development and parking on both sides of Oxford Road should be dealt with. Clarification was sought as to whether there would be double yellow lines on one side of Oxford Road.
- iii) Concern was expressed regarding:
 - The comfort of the seats on the new buses being provided by StageCoach.
 - Problems created by the installation of parking bays on Park Road and Oxford Road which mean that vehicles are required to pull out to see what's coming. It was felt that more problems had been created than it cured. Officers indicated that they would check the scheme for Oxford Road and Members suggested that schemes should be brought to scrutiny before they are imposed. These comments were taken on board and agreed that rather than bringing every scheme to scrutiny the Forum could include in its final report a recommendation that all Ward Councillors should be involved/consulted in the process for the approval of schemes.

Decision

The feedback provided was noted.

KEVIN CRANNEY

CHAIRMAN

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Decision

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Decision

The feedback provided was noted.

KEVIN CRANNEY

CHAIRMAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

MINUTES

17th February 2006

Present:

Councillor: Kevin Cranney (In the Chair)

Councillors: John Cambridge, Bob Flintoff, Gerard Hall, John Lauderdale,
John Marshall, Carl Richardson and Victor Tumilty

Resident

Reps: Linda Shields and Steve Gibbon

Officers: Ian Jopling, Transportation Team Leader
John Lewer, Public Transport Co-ordinator
Charlotte Burnham, Scrutiny Manager
Rebecca Redman, Research Assistant, Scrutiny
Joan Wilkins, Principal Democratic Services Officer

50. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rob Cook.

51. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

52. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th January 2006

Confirmed.

53. Responses from the Council, the Executive to Committees of the Council to Reports of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

54. Consideration of Request for Scrutiny Reviews Referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee

No items.

55. Consideration of Progress Reports/Budget and Policy Framework Documents

No items.

56. Hartlepool Second Local Transport Plan (Head of Technical Services)

The Head of Technical Services submitted a report outlining the background to the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and sought the Forums views on transport schemes and initiatives being considered for inclusion within the final Plan. Details of the proposed schemes were as follows:

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MINUTES

17th February 2006

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Decision

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KEVIN CRANNEY

CHAIRMAN

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

28 February 2006



Report of: Research Assistant

Subject: Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision – Evidence from Stagecoach

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of the Forum that Stagecoach have been invited to attend this meeting to provide further evidence in relation to this Forum's ongoing investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that Stagecoach have previously attended a number of meetings, both formal and informal, and have contributed to the discussions being held. Stagecoach also kindly arranged a site visit to allow Members to experience a number of bus routes within Hartlepool.
- 2.2 The General Manager and Commercial Manager of Stagecoach Hartlepool have agreed to attend this meeting to submit further evidence of a local perspective to the Forum.
- 2.3 During this evidence gathering session with the General Manager and Commercial Manager of Stagecoach, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the following key questions:-
 - (a) What are your roles and responsibilities as a commercial provider of bus services in Hartlepool?
 - (b) How do your services meet the needs of Hartlepool residents?
 - (c) How have you overcome the barriers to using bus services for disabled individuals?
 - (d) What information do you provide in relation to the co-ordination, timing of, and changes to services?
 - (e) How do you determine which routes are viable and non-viable?
 - (f) What does the operation of bus services cost on viable and non viable routes?
 - (g) What ticketing schemes do you operate and how are they funded?

- (h) What subsidy do you receive from the Authority for concessionary fares?
- (i) What advertising/marketing campaigns have you organised/funded to promote your bus network in Hartlepool?
- (j) Do you propose to make any changes to the Hartlepool fleet in the near future?
- (k) What can the Authority do to aid Stagecoach in increasing bus user patronage?

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the General Manager and Commercial Manager of Stagecoach in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3

Contact Officers: - Rebecca Redman – Temp Research Assistant (Scrutiny)
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523 647

Email: rebecca.redman@hartlepool.gov.uk

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 to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 August 2005.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

28 February 2006



Report of: Research Assistant

Subject: Scrutiny Investigation into Hartlepool's Bus Service Provision – Focus Group Feedback

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To facilitate a discussion amongst Members of the Forum in relation to the focus group session held on 15 February 2006 with members of the public in connection with their 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 in order to seek the views of a sample of users and potential users of the current bus service provision within Hartlepool a focus group session was arranged. The event was publicised in local newspapers, on local radio and on the Councils website and notice board. Stagecoach also kindly advertised the meeting on their buses and handed flyers to passengers.
- 2.3 At the Focus Group meeting Members of the public received a presentation from the Authority's Transportation Team Leader who outlined the findings of a period of consultation with the public about the second Local Transport Plan and draft Bus Strategy.
- 2.4 Members of the public were then provided with an opportunity to submit evidence of a local perspective to the Forum, offer their views and ask any questions about the current bus service provision in Hartlepool.
- 2.5 Members of the Forum noted the comments made and concerns raised by those who attended the focus group session. A summary of the issues discussed are outlined below:-

(a) punctuality and reliability of Stagecoach services;

- (b) viable/non viable routes and customer demand impacting upon the services Stagecoach provide;
- (c) diversion of services and subsequent impact upon the efficiency of services;
- (d) resources available to the Authority to subsidise non viable bus routes;
- (e) concessionary fares and the Authority's indicative settlement;
- (f) poor provision/lack of bus shelters, bus stop flags, timetable information and available funding for improvements;
- (g) utilisation of Council transport facilities;
- (h) No.5 Service and the absence of a service from the Headland to West View after 5pm;
- (i) possible provision of a shuttle service from the Headland and West View into the town centre;
- (j) provision of an interchange and/or a Town Centre bus station;
- (k) absence of a service to both sides of the Marina;
- (l) use of transport services such as Ring and Ride and provision from the voluntary sector;
- (m) Victoria Harbour Development and possible services/funding from Developer;
- (n) the termination of a school bus service (Grange Road to High Tunstall);
- (o) the roles and responsibilities of Stagecoach, as a commercial provider, and of the Authority, in relation to the provision of bus services within Hartlepool;
- (p) possible incentive schemes to increase bus user patronage;
- (q) Easier to access service at Morrisons; and
- (r) Marketing and advertising by Stagecoach, Arriva and Leven Valley to promote services.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the issues raised at the focus group meeting outlined in section 2.4.

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Hartlepool Borough Council
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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 to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Forum on 19 August 2005.