

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL  
13TH DECEMBER 2023**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Maynard)  
Councillors Campsall, Fox, Lawrence, O'Neill and  
Seaton

Councillor Blackshaw (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Communities and Neighbourhoods)

Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: None

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND  
NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

3. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

4. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions were submitted.

5. SCRUTINY SCOPING DOCUMENT

Considered and discussed, the scrutiny scope document for the Panel, agreed by Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 9th October 2023. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Democratic Services Officer explained that the scoping document was a live document and would be updated following each meeting, to reflect the discussions of the panel.
- ii. Members felt that the detail in the 'what will be excluded' section of the scoping document should be moved into the 'what will be included' section, as the

information was about the focus of the panel. The Chair stated that when scoping the document with the Democratic Services Manager, there was nothing obvious to include in the 'what will be excluded' section.

- iii. The panel felt that it would be beneficial to include the night-time economy in their scope, to look at the relationship between public transport use and the night-time economy.
- iv. The panel discussed some of the changes to bus services that they were aware of and felt that there was a requirement to identify the communities not being served by public transport.
- v. The panel discussed the idea of buses running on a rota system. For example, the bus service would take a different route each day to allow members of the community to travel to different areas within the Borough.
- vi. Demand Response Transport (DRT) was a service provided by Leicestershire County Council, that enabled members of the public to request a minibus to provide journeys not covered by official bus routes. For example, DRTs were used in some communities to transport people directly to supermarkets. It was highlighted that this type of service would not be reliable enough for people to use for a journey into work. The scoping document included requesting a delegate from Leicestershire County Council to speak to the panel as a witness. The panel felt that it would be beneficial for the delegate to discuss DRT with the panel.
- vii. It was highlighted that the Team Leader – Strategic Development in Charnwood Borough Council's Planning department was due to attend the panel's meeting on 7th February 2024, to discuss the link between Section 106 agreements and public transport. This discussion would now take place at the panel's meeting on 27th March 2024. Members felt that a briefing note on the relationship between Section 106 agreements and public transport would be beneficial before the panel met with the officer, to enable them to develop an understanding and to prepare valuable questions for the officer.
- viii. Members felt that some of the bus services provided in the Borough were not reliable or dependable. This could mean that members of the community may look for other methods of transportation to avoid the lack of reliability. This decreases the demand for bus services and could result in services being cut.

## **AGREED**

1. That the panel notes the scoping document.
2. That the Democratic Services Officer change the scoping document to reflect the discussion during this item;
  - The detail in the 'what will be excluded' section of the scoping document should be moved into the 'what will be included'.

- To include the night-time economy in the scope of the panel.
  - To identify the communities that were not being served by public transport.
3. That a briefing note on the relationship between Section 106 agreements and public transport be prepared by the Team Leader – Strategic Development in advance of their meeting with the officer (27th March 2024).

6. LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, the Leicestershire County Council Bus Improvement Plan and its annual review, published in October 2022. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Democratic Services Officer highlighted that the Leicestershire County Council Cabinet would be considering a report titled ‘Improving Passenger Transport through Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus and Network North Funding’ at their meeting on 19th December 2023. The recommendations outlined in the report were to approve the revised Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS), and to authorise the Director of Environment and Transport;
  - To use the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP+) grant of £1,790,000 for 2023/24 and £1,790,000 for 2024/25 and additional £4,050,000 one-off revenue funding for 2024/25 from the Department for Transport detailed in this report to develop a reshaped Leicestershire supported passenger transport network, including working with transport operators through the Enhanced Partnership;
  - Following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, to amend the PTPS as necessary with regard to the mechanism for determining support for passenger transport services to reflect prevailing market forces.
- ii. The panel felt that it would be beneficial to review this report and the appendices to be considered by the Leicestershire County Council Cabinet and would schedule this into their work programme. The reports to the agenda were outdated and the new report to the Leicestershire County Council Cabinet would be more beneficial for the panel to review.
- iii. The panel agreed to invite a delegate from Leicestershire County Council to their meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024.
- iv. The panel agreed to invite delegates from bus providers (Kinch Bus, Arriva, Centre Bus) to their meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024. The discussion should include the reliability of bus services.

- v. The Lead Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods highlighted a Bus Service User Group, which she had been invited to attend. This group included members of the community that used bus services, and delegates from bus providers.
- vi. The panel discussed the ownership of bus stops in the Borough. Accessible and well maintained bus stops were more likely to be used. It was thought that some bus stops were adopted by the Borough Council and some were adopted by the Parish Councils.

## **AGREED**

- 1. That a delegate from Leicestershire County Council be invited to attend the panel meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024.
- 2. That delegates from Bus providers (Kinch Bus, Arriva, Centre Bus) be invited to attend the panel meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024. The discussion should include the reliability of bus services.

## 7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT SURVEY

In accordance with the scrutiny scope document (key tasks), considered and discussed, a report to consider the results of a borough-wide survey on the provision of public transport. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was recognised that there were areas within the Borough that had not been represented in the survey.
- ii. There had been only one response from the Loughborough area, and so it was difficult to understand the provision of public transport across the Loughborough area.
- iii. There was a train service available through some of the villages in the Borough. Whilst this was useful, there were a number of issues with the services. When flooding prevents bus services from operating through their usual routes, the train services were more popular as residents accessed alternative ways of getting out of the villages. This meant that train services were overprescribed and that people were denied access. It was also raised that trains were significantly more expensive to use than buses and so this made them inaccessible to some people.
- iv. It was suggested that the Public Transport survey be updated and circulated again to Borough Councillors only. This would ensure that Borough Councillors had a further opportunity to comment and this may increase the information obtained for the panel to consider.
- v. It was suggested that the Bus Service User Group could be utilised to gain further understanding of the issues residents faced in relation to public transport. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to look at this as a possibility.

## AGREED

1. That the Democratic Services Officer circulate an updated version of the Public Transport survey to Borough Councillors only.
2. That the Democratic Services Officer look at how the panel could work with the Bus Service User Group to gain further understanding of the issues residents faced in relation to public transport.

## 8. WORK PROGRAMME AND KEY TASK PLANNING

Considered and discussed, the key tasks in the scrutiny scope document and items raised during the meeting, to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel, and subsequent meetings, and any work members of the Panel would undertake in advance of the next meeting. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The panel made changes to their work programme as follows;
  - The Team Leader – Strategic Development (Planning) be invited to the meeting of the panel scheduled for 27th March 2024, and a briefing note be requested in advance of that meeting.
  - Leicestershire County Council delegates to be invited to the panel meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024 to discuss DRTs and the ‘Improving Passenger Transport through Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus and Network North Funding’. The Chair also raised that it may be beneficial for her to have a discussion with the Lead Member for Highways, Transportation and Flooding at Leicestershire County Council, following meeting with officers. It was suggested that the meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024 be moved to the day time to make the meeting more accessible to Leicestershire County Council officers.
  - Delegates from the bus companies (Kinch Bus, Arriva, Centre Bus) be invited to the panel meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024 to discuss the reliability of services and demand of services.

*Post meeting note: The panel also requested that a delegate from East Midlands trains be invited to the meeting on 7th February 2024.*

- The further information collected following the circulation of the updated Public Transport survey to ward members be scheduled for the panel meeting on 27th March 2024. Following the consideration of this information, the panel could decide on the communities not being served by public transport.

## AGREED

1. That the work programme be updated to reflect the discussions during this item.
2. That the meeting scheduled for 7th February 2024 be moved to the day time, to increase the accessibility of the meeting for Leicestershire County Council officers.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 15th January 2024 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Public Transport Scrutiny Panel.