

REPORT TO: Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 24th June 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Nominations of Members to the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel – Municipal Year 2015/16

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the nominations of Members to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2015/16, and report on the key issues discussed / raised by the Panel when it met during the Municipal Year 2014/15.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The Chair of the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Transportation, nominates a Chair and three Members to the Public Transport Advisory Panel and for the Member nominated as the Chair to agree such deputies, as may be required from time to time;**
- 2) The Board endorse the nominations; and**
- 3) The key issues discussed by the Panel during the Municipal Year 2014/15, as set out in Appendix One of the Report, are noted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At the start of each Municipal Year, it is necessary to nominate a Chair and three other Members to attend meetings of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel.

3.2 The purpose of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel is to:-

- Monitor the performance of the public transport network within the Borough to ensure it meets the mobility needs of local communities;

- To make recommendations to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on future developments and improvements to the conventional local public transport network; and
- To review and comment on the effectiveness of the Council's public transport priorities.

3.3 A summary of the key issues discussed at the Halton Public Transport Liaison Panel, during 2014/15, are shown in Appendix 1

3.4 The Board is asked to support those nominations proposed by the Chair of the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Transportation, which will be announced at the meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

It is widely recognised that good quality and affordable public transport services help to improve access to key facilities for children and young people within the Borough. A key role of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel is to review progress and comment on emerging initiatives.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Halton Borough Council and its partners continue to provide a wide range of accessible and affordable public transport services within the Borough aimed at improving access to key employment, learning and training facilities. These are reported at meetings of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Improving access to health care facilities is acknowledged as a key priority in Halton. Progress on achieving these improvements are reported and discussed at the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel.

6.4 A Safer Halton

No direct implications

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Improving access to key regeneration areas by sustainable forms of transport including public transport, walking and cycling is widely

acknowledged as playing a key role in sustainable regeneration and urban renewal. The Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel plays a key role in discussing and shaping the future direction of those initiatives associated with public transport within Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Good quality and affordable public transport services can play a key role in ensuring all sections of the community can access a wide range of facilities.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix One

Summary of the key Issues discussed at the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel – Municipal Year 2014/15.

Two meetings were held during 2014/15 Municipal Year, as follows:

- Wednesday 23rd April 2014 at Civic Suite, Runcorn Town Hall
- Wednesday 22nd October 2014 at The Board Room, Municipal Building

LOCAL BUS SERVICE CHANGES

The Panel was updated at both meetings on changes to the local bus network during the periods leading up to the meetings. These updates included information on: the cancellations of services; the introduction of new bus services and changes to supported bus services, were they timetable changes or requirements to re-tender.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

The Panel was informed of improvements carried out to public transport infrastructure and information, including:

- The addition and replacement of bus shelters at locations around the borough and the procurement exercise for the provision of bus shelters.
- Improvements and investment to infrastructure and waiting facilities (cleanliness/seating, etc) including Runcorn High Street Bus Station, Widnes Green Oaks, Halton Lea South major interchanges.
- Details around bus stop upgrades to accessible standards including locations, numbers of stops upgraded and percentage of stops at accessible standard
- Timetable information, detailing information updates, replacement information due to damage/vandalism and changes on the website, etc.

LSTF UPDATE

The Panel received progress updates on several bids including:

Service 329, St. Helens to Sci-Tech Daresbury via Burtonwood and Warrington – the route directly followed and served the bus improvement corridor set out in the original proposals of the project. The 329 service directly connected all three authorities, providing links between key employment areas and operated a half hourly service from Monday to Saturday.

Service 200, Runcorn Station, Murdishaw, Runcorn Employment Sites (Circular) via Whitehouse, Daresbury and Manor Park – a circular service which connects the key transport hub in Runcorn, the train station, with all industrial/employment areas of Runcorn. The route makes use of and followed the segregated busway which dissects the business parks in Runcorn.

Travel Plan Action Fund

A total of 63 businesses across 7 large business parks within the Mid Mersey area were approached and offered the opportunity to apply for match funding from the Travel Plan Action Fund. The business parks were as follows:

Halton

- Daresbury Park;
- Astmoor;
- Manor Park;
- Preston Brook;
- White House Industrial Estate.

St Helens

- Mere Grange
- Lea Green

Warrington

- Centre Park

Of the 63 businesses engaged a total of 16 were initially accepted for funding. 10 of those businesses successfully delivered sustainable transport projects totalling **£74,713** in match funding.

Real Time Information

A total of 17 sites have now had real time information units installed and received upgrades to accommodate these units.

Final Report

A final project report on the LSTF programme has been commissioned from AECOM and will be available in the coming weeks.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES

The Panel received updates on a range of issues including:

- Contract re-tendering, re-planning of services, the outcome of the Logistics Division efficiency review, and savings requirements affecting transport services provided on behalf of Children's and Adults

- Replacement passenger vehicles – notification was given to the panel that six low-floor accessible minibuses had been replaced as well as seven cars during 2013. These vehicles required replacement due to expiry of the contract hire arrangements.

- In-house Fleet Vehicle Advertising, detailing that vehicle advertisements were present on seven minibuses vehicles including; Halton CCG (4), Children's Centres (2) and Runcorn Market (1)
- In-house Fleet Vehicle Safety Equipment including: the installation of TomTom units to all vehicles; fitting of CCTV to all minibuses; fitting of reverse parking sensors to all minibuses; fitting of wheelchair winches to two minibuses and winch kits to all ramp access minibuses; and the purchase of heavy duty wheelchair restraints for each minibus.
- Health related Transport Journeys - detailing transport services and trials undertaken in conjunction with Halton CCG including a hospital discharge transport service as well as numerous ad-hoc transport jobs
- Vehicle and Passenger Booking System - describing the tender process for purchase of a replacement transport system and the financial savings attributed as compared with licensing/support costs of previous system
- Independent Travel Training - including the continued success of travel training, the reported benefits to individuals and the financial savings involved as well as the potential to run 'Train the Trainer' courses.
- Accessible Transport Services - an update on door-to-door transport services provided by Halton Community Transport, including passenger numbers using the Dial-A-Ride daytime and evening service.

OTHER UPDATES

The Panel was presented with reports and updates relating to various other transport related matters including:

Passenger Satisfaction

The following is a link to a recent report detailing overall passenger satisfaction levels nationally on local bus services.

<http://www.route-one.net/industry/passengers/the-real-kpi-what-passengers-think/>

Main findings were as follows:

- 9 out of 10 (92%) of 47,000 passengers surveyed were satisfied
- Value for money, quality information and helpful drivers most important
- Measures included on bus, waiting facilities, outside of bus and drivers
- Highest scores achieved in York, Norfolk, Suffolk, Merseyside (90%)
- Issues addressed with First UK Bus whose scores have been low

Travelwatch

The latest Travel Watch North West meeting was held in Lancaster on Thursday 12th February 2015, this was sponsored by First TransPennine

Express. Unfortunately, no officer from Halton was available to attend, however, from minutes now circulated, the following items were discussed:

- Supporting Bus Travel in Lancashire
Local bus support, concessionary travel information and issues, community transport, information provision, school travel.
- Delivering for our customers, First TransPennine Express
11th year of operation, passenger numbers doubled to 26 million passengers/year,
10 new trains have recently entered service providing 40 vehicles,
Track and train maintenance challenges, Blue Assist concept,
World Host concept, investment going forward, re-franchising
- Focussing on the needs of the North, Franchising Lead for Rail North
Rail North was set up in 2012 to develop long term rail strategies and prioritise rail development and investment over the next 20 years. Rail North has several key objectives around quality and growth.

Buses in Crisis Report / CBT Bus Services Facing Crisis

According to a report by the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT), bus services are "facing crisis" with many councils cutting budgets. Half of local authorities in England and Wales have slashed funding for buses in 2014/15, with the cuts amounting to more than £9m when compared with 2013/14. CBT added that since 2010 local authority funding for bus services had been reduced by 15%, or £44m, with more than 2,000 routes being reduced or withdrawn entirely. The CBT said some authorities are looking at reductions in future years with Derbyshire Country Council proposing cuts of more than £2.5m. "The government must wake up to the crisis facing buses," said CBT. A DfT spokesman said: "We know that bus services are vital, including for many older and disabled people. That is why the government provides substantial funding, protected until 2015/16, to bus operators to help more services run and keep ticket prices down.