

**COUNCILLORS**

Nigel Moxon (Chairman)  
Tom Hollis (Vice-Chairman) **Apologies**

Richard Butler  
Anne Callaghan BEM  
Penny Gowland  
Mike Introna  
John Ogle

Stephen Garner **Absent**  
Roger Upton  
Jonathan Wheeler  
Elizabeth Williamson

**SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan for Councillor Tom Hollis

**OTHER COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor Neil Clarke MBE

**OFFICERS**

Martin Elliott	Senior Scrutiny Officer
Derek Higton	Service Director, Place and Communities
Pete Mathieson	Team Manager, Commissioning and Policy
Kate Morris	Democratic Services Officer
Gary Wood	Head of Highways and Transport

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 6 July 2022, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**2. MEMBERSHIP – TO NOTE THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR  
STEPHEN GARNER TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE IN PLACE OF  
COUNCILLOR NIGEL TURNER**

The Committee noted the membership update.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Tom Hollis (Other reasons)

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 5. **PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND LOCAL BUS OVERVIEW**

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, the Service Director, Place and Communities, the Team Manager - Commissioning and Policy and the Group Manager - Highway Planning Access & Commissioning attended the meeting to provide a presentation that gave an overview of the Council's public transport and local bus arrangements in Nottinghamshire, a **summary** of the presentation is detailed below:

- Transport provision was an important element of the Nottinghamshire Plan being integral to a number of the key ambitions set out within the plan.
- That the budget for public transport provision was £30million, supplemented by additional grant funding.
- Public transport provision was delivered in partnership with internal and external partners, including the Children and Families Department and the Adult Social Care and Public Health Department within the Council and alongside commercial bus operators.
- How Nottinghamshire County Council compared favourably in its support for public transport in comparison to other similar local authorities.
- The overarching objective of the service was to deliver reliable, resilient public transport that supported growth, a thriving economy and healthy travel. This was enabled by:
  - Ensuring access to key services such as employment opportunities, and maximising opportunities to improve the environment.
  - Enhanced partnerships, demonstrating strong but balanced working relationships with commercial bus operators were established in April 2022 and are due for reaffirmation in November 2022
  - Strong working relationships with district and borough Councils and other neighbouring authorities
  - Information sharing with universities, businesses, and Chamber of Commerce to inform decisions
  - Consideration of feedback from service users and members to inform operational context
- There were a number of challenges facing public transport that included:
  - Inflationary costs of current contracts, and running costs
  - Difficulties with driver recruitment, that was also a problem across the country
  - The ending of Government funding in April 2023 that had been in place during the pandemic to support and protect public transport
  - Increased numbers of SEND students and adults with specific needs who required access to transport
  - A reduction in passenger numbers, compared to before the pandemic.

- The Council had a number of statutory duties around maintained school transport and SEND. It was noted that the Council transported around 10,000 mainstream students and 1,500 SEND students a year. Discretionary transport to Faith schools and post-16 provision was also provided. There was a budget of £15million for these services.
- The Independent Travel Training scheme had run since 2011 and aimed to ensure individuals had the confidence and skills to travel independently. Eight Special schools and twenty maintained schools were participants in the programme with more than 400 students taking part. Nottinghamshire County Council was recognised nationally as being at the forefront of this provision and had supported other authorities in establishing similar schemes.
- Fleet services that provided transport to day-care had been integrated with local bus services. There were 65 vehicles in total, and the process of diversifying the fleet had started with the introduction of electric buses.
- There were over 80 routes currently being supported by the Council with a further 20 being supported through service recovery, post pandemic.
- The Nottsbus “On Demand” service was operating in three pilot areas. These services could be booked either through an app or by phone and aimed to link passengers into the existing transport network.
- A full review of the bus network was being undertaken that would take into account feedback and demand and projected passenger figures. A new three-year plan would be produced following the full review that would allow time for the operating environment to stabilise and for additional funding from Government to be provided.
- Investment in the network had been ongoing and since 2007 there had been four new bus stations built across Nottinghamshire. There were also district hubs and on-street interchanges as well as with over 6,000 bus stops and shelters. Other transport infrastructure that was provided included bus lanes, Traffic Regulation Orders, Bus Stop Clearways and traffic light priorities, all maintained in partnership with commercial operators.
- Timetabling information for all services was available both online and at bus stops with real time updates being available at stops across the majority of the network.
- The Council issued 153,000 concessionary passes, 10,000 disabled concessionary passes and 3,500 companion passes. It was noted that there were plans to look at the possibilities for an under-22’s scheme and a job seekers scheme as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

In the discussion that followed, members raised the following points:

- The Nottsbus “On Demand” pilot scheme was welcomed by Committee members and they questioned if there were any plans to extend it. They also commented that marketing material should be made available to all groups, including elderly residents, unable or unlikely to access online services.
- A review of concessionary fares was requested that would look at valid times for travel and the financial impact that that they had. Concerns were raised that isolated, elderly, or vulnerable citizens may choose not to travel using the current scheme due to bus reliability, further isolating them. There were also queries around the potential for NHS staff and Care Workers to receive concessionary passes which would support additional busses by encouraging more people to use the routes. Members also whether concessionary fares could be used on both bus and rail networks.
- Members asked several questions around the processes around which bus routes that were selected to receive financial support from the Council.
- Concerns were raised about the accuracy of the real time bus information displays and around the accuracy of the information that was fed into the system.
- Committee Members asked what lobbying was taking place around De-Regulation and the budgetary challenges causing risk to service provision.
- Committee Members highlighted the importance of supporting services, not only based on service cost, but on how they supported growth, the environmental benefits, how they supported vulnerable people, and increased access to key services all supported by a regular and reliable service.
- The presentation only considered the bus network, it did not address the tram or train network, or cycle infrastructure. Committee members asked that a wider review be considered to include the rail and Tram network in the future.

In response to the points raised the Cabinet Member the Service Director, Place and Communities, the Team Manager - Commissioning and Policy and the Group Manager - Highway Planning Access & Commissioning provided the following responses:

- The Nottsbus “On Demand” was not a “door to door” service but a way for communities that had limited access to public transport to link with exiting public transport networks. Following the initial trial scheme, data would be analysed before the scheme was extended. Feedback would be sought from service users and Councillors from the areas covered by the scheme. It was noted that initial feedback from service users had been positive.
- The Council, jointly with Nottingham City Council, was one of only 17 authorities across the country to be successful in its bid for grant funding

and had received £30million as part of the National Bus Service Improvement Plan. A Joint Development team had been established with the colleagues from the districts and boroughs to consider joint funding options, planning issues and travel plans.

- Meetings had recently taken place with the commercial bus operators to discuss services and how the Council could support the drive for recruitment of new drivers in order to improve service reliability.
- Passenger numbers remained below those seen before the pandemic. This was likely due to a variety of reasons including change in work and leisure habits, and a reduction in public confidence in using public transport.
- Officers confirmed that they were able to liaise with the commercial operators around the time concessionary fares were offered and make suggestions, but they could not mandate companies to alter their policies. There was also the issue of funding and how alterations to the schemes would impact service budgets.
- Officers summarised the processes used, and the factors taken into consideration when deciding which services to support that included, passenger numbers and demand, the Index of Multiple Deprivation, car ownership levels and the alternative transport options that were available. Services were regularly monitored to ensure that the right ones were being supported.
- Difficulties with the real time update information system had recently been compounded by technical difficulties and by service reliability due to driver availability. It was noted that information fed into the real-time system came directly from the bus operators and that sometimes changes came in quick succession, and bus cancellation could be last minute with little notice. These factors could then impact on the information being presented on the information displays.
- The Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment confirmed that the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ben Bradley MP, had recently secured a parliamentary debate on Transport in Nottinghamshire escalating and promoting local issues and pushing to promote improvement. In terms of deregulation there is a function that allows the Mayor or Combined Authority to step in, but only after the service is determined to no longer be functioning properly.
- Officers confirmed that a wider review of public transport could be undertaken, and that the initial focus had been the bus network in order to establish the Committee's areas of interest for further scrutiny.

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and the Service Director, Place and Communities, the Team Manager, Commissioning and Policy and the Group Manager, Highway Planning Access & Commissioning etc for the attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

## **RESOLVED 2022/001**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a member-led review be carried out on the Council's Concessionary Travel Scheme by members of the Place Select Committee.
3. That as soon as available, full performance data on all aspects of the "On Demand" bus services be circulated to members of the Place Select Committee.
4. That members of the Place Select Committee be given the opportunity to feed into the development of the scheduled Bus Services Review.
5. That as soon as available, details of the promotional campaign to encourage bus use in Nottinghamshire be circulated to members of the Place Select Committee.
6. That information on the Council's policy for providing school transport for Looked After Children be circulated to members of the Place Select Committee.
7. That a report be brought to a future meeting of the Place Select Committee on the subsidies and support provided by the Council for bus services in Nottinghamshire.

## **6. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its Work Programme.

## **RESOLVED 2022/002**

1. That the Work Programme be noted.
2. That committee members make any further suggestions of items for inclusion on the work programme to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (subject to consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and senior officers and the required approval by the Chairman of the Overview Committee).

The meeting closed at 12:18pm

**CHAIRMAN**