

9 January 2014

Agenda Item:

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – TRANSPORT, PROPERTY &
ENVIRONMENT**

**MANSFIELD BUS STATION AND MANSFIELD TOWN CENTRE STATUTORY
QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP – BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS**

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on Mansfield Bus Station since its opening in March 2013.
2. To provide an update on the Mansfield Town Centre Statutory Quality Bus Partnership (SQBP) scheme.
3. To seek approval for the development of further SQBP's or Voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships (VQBP) to add value to the County Council's investment in the new Worksop Bus station and the completion of the Bus/Tram interchange in Beeston.

Information and Advice

4. Mansfield Bus Station opened in March 2013 and has been warmly received by local residents and the surrounding area. A recent survey of passengers using the bus station reported that:
 - 42% use the new bus station more than at the old bus station,
 - 88% believe the location is better
 - 93% rate the bus station's appearance and cleanliness as good or very good.
5. A peer review was carried out this summer by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, of which the highlights were:
 - First impressions are very positive with a bright, spacious and clean facility
 - Excellent electronic information provision (passenger information displays (PIDS) at stands and main PID screen)
 - Good specification of toilet furniture to hotel standards
 - Good seating specification

- Very informative customer service desk which is well located for passenger use
 - On the whole, a good facility, well-furnished and inviting
 - New fully accessible buses were noted
6. Bus operators have been very positive about the operation of the new bus station and the facilities provided for their customers and staff.
 7. Mansfield District Council, our project and management partners, have also during Steering Group meetings provided positive feedback on the operation and management of the Bus station by the County Council.
 8. Catering and Facilities Management (CFM) have provided a strong team of Customer Service Operatives and Cleaners and deliver an excellent support service.
 9. The Travel Information Centre is a well visited facility offering travel planning, inter-urban coach and local bus tickets for sale as well as general information on the bus station and the surrounding area. Ticket sales have risen steadily month by month with projected turnover exceeding original estimates by 32%.
 10. The two retail units have now been let, one to the Spar who report healthy sales and the second to a not-for-profit catering venture offering employment and training to adults with learning difficulties, which is proving very popular and is being very well used.
 11. The lessons learnt from the delivery and management of the Mansfield bus station will be used for the provision and service to be provided at the new Worksop bus station to be opened in Spring 2015. This includes partnership working with bus operators, the District Council and consultation with local residents.

Mansfield Statutory Quality Bus Partnership (SQBP)

12. The formulation of a Statutory Quality partnership was approved in January 2012 and on the 6th May 2013 Mansfield's Statutory Quality Bus Partnership came into operation. This has achieved improvements to the town centre infrastructure, the highway, vehicle quality and bus service information including:-
 - Investment by the County Council of £9.11M including the bus station
 - 24 new or refurbished bus stops and shelters in Mansfield. The shelters have clear timetable and bus service maps, providing passengers with additional journey planning and way finding information.
 - 14 bus stops that are real time enabled to take away some of the uncertainties related to bus travel.

- Bus stop clearways at all stops which improve accessibility to the bus stops and prevents services being delayed.
 - Targeted parking enforcement in the area to ensure bus accessibility to the Town Centre is improved and to improve reliability of bus services.
 - Four bus lanes have been refreshed, which are legally enforceable, which improve journey times and reliability.
 - Investment of £4.8 million by the bus operators in vehicles as a direct result of the SQBP.
 - Vehicles meeting a minimum of Euro 3 emission standards and the provision of enhanced cleaning and customer care offers.
 - The fitting of real time to Trentbarton vehicles, Stagecoach have indicated that real time will be rolled out across their fleet in the very near future.
13. Operators are reporting a projected patronage growth of 2% in the first year of operation.
14. A recent survey of bus services departing Mansfield Bus Station has shown a punctuality improvement of 2.7% due to the new location and management of traffic flows.

Development of SQBP or Voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships (VQBP) for Beeston Interchange, Worksop Bus Station and their Town Centres

15. The difference between a SQBP and VQBP is that the former is a local agreement which commits each partner to implement its part of the service improvements, deliver the funding and meet the timescales. The SQBP also ensures that the agreed standards are met and prevents substandard services being provided. The VQBP depends on voluntary participation and does not guarantee delivery of the desired improvements.
16. It is hoped that the bus operators agree to a SQBP for both the Beeston and Worksop schemes.
17. At the end of 2014 or Spring 2015 there will be a new tram/bus interchange in Beeston Town Centre and a new bus station in Worksop Town centre which will be a catalyst for the reconfiguration and improvement of local bus services in both areas, promoting access to key services and job opportunities. It is imperative that the buses that use these new facilities, and adjacent bus infrastructure is comparable, to create a high standard of provision within both town centres and add value to public sector investment.
18. The new tram/bus interchange in Beeston Town Centre will provide 6 Bus Stops which is one less than at present. Bus operators have indicated that the level of services is unlikely to significantly change. The new interchange will need to be effectively managed by the County Council to ensure it is used

efficiently, minimises any conflicts between bus and tram and protects passenger safety. On-going discussions are being held with Broxtowe Borough Council and the bus operators to determine the final interchange provision for bus services when the tram commences operation in late 2014.

19. To achieve these quality and service standards it is proposed that a formal SQBP or VQBP for Beeston and Worksop, within the provisions of the Transport Act 2000, is considered to achieve the following objectives:
 - Enhance bus services and infrastructure.
 - Improve the quality of local bus services by restricting the use of bus stops within a defined area to those buses that meet prescribed quality standards i.e. fully accessible buses with a minimum emissions standard of Euro 3.
 - To enable bus operators to meet the Traffic Commissioner requirements for bus service reliability and punctuality.
 - To facilitate an increased modal share for public Transport in line with Local Transport Plan and sustainability objectives.
 - To increase passenger growth and assist with traffic congestion.
 - To improve customer experience, this will be achieved through the promotion of bus travel, information improvements (including electronic information), integrated ticketing and new vehicles. Studies show that real time improvements alone can bring a 2% increase in passenger journeys.
 - To manage the Beeston bus/tram interchange, with a slot booking system to improve bus service reliability and punctuality.
20. This approach in Mansfield has been very successful as outlined earlier in the report and the operators continue to support the SQBP in Mansfield Town Centre and the benefits it brings to customer satisfaction and passenger growth.
21. The SQBP schemes would come into effect once the new tram/bus interchange and Worksop bus station are opened. These agreements will be valid for 5 years with a view to extending them if agreed with the operators. It is proposed to enter into formal consultation with the bus operators so that agreements can be in place when the new facilities become operational.

Quality Standards

22. The quality standards will be similar to those established for the Mansfield SQBP and discussions with the bus operators and District/Borough Councils are ongoing.
23. The quality standards for vehicles within the proposed SQBP/VQBP will include minimum emission standards for vehicles, accessible buses and minimum driving qualifications and training.
24. The bus infrastructure will be maintained to high quality standards, bus station staff where applicable trained to a comparable qualification level as bus drivers and parking and bus priority measures enforced.

Financial Implications

Beeston Town Centre

25. The scheme area will centre on the new tram/bus interchange and include bus stops in the main shopping areas of Beeston and Chilwell High Road. The scheme will extend to the South West to include upgraded public transport information facilities at Beeston Railway Station. The scheme is currently provisional with the outcome being determined by the location of the bus interchange. A map of the scheme area is Appendix 1.
26. To improve the bus stops, review bus priority measures, introduce a slot booking system to manage the bus stops, implement camera enforcement this will require £73.5K of LTP funding which will be met from the 2014/2015 provision, a breakdown is shown at Appendix 2.
27. Additional revenue costs of £10K a year to improve the cleaning and maintenance regime, energy costs, CCTV monitoring and enforcement will be met from existing funding.

Worksop Town Centre

28. This scheme area will centre on Worksop Town extending from the Market Place in the south to North Notts. College and from Newcastle Avenue in the west to Memorial Avenue in the east as shown in Appendix 3.
29. To improve bus stops priority measures and enforcement will require £35.1K of LTP funding, a breakdown is shown at Appendix 4. The costs are less for this scheme because a number of bus stops in the area have recently been improved.
30. Additional revenue costs of £10K to improve the cleaning and maintenance regime, energy costs CCTV monitoring and enforcement will be met from existing funding.

Other Options Considered

Do nothing - No SQBP or VQBP

31. Missed opportunity to build on the success of Mansfield SQBP and miss a one off opportunity to bring public transport in Beeston and Worksop up to a similar standard as Mansfield Town centre.
32. Bus passenger waiting and information facilities may not be upgraded to match the improvements being offered by the new tram service.
33. In Beeston a restricted number of stopping places and a large number of bus departures each hour will make it challenging to manage use of the bus/ tram

interchange. Without an enforceable departure slot booking system it will not be possible to control bus movements leading to traffic conflicts at the interchange. This may also compromise passenger safety.

Do minimum

34. Upgrades could be minimised within the defined areas but would not be comparable with other facilities provided by the County Council.
35. The bus operators do not invest in service and vehicle improvements to the same level as expected, which equated to over £4.8m in Mansfield.

Statutory and Policy Implications

36. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

37. The Mansfield example has demonstrated that investment in passenger facilities and information provision coupled with operator investment in vehicles will encourage more people to use public transport thus reducing car use, congestion, CO2 emissions, NOX and particulates.

Implications for service users

38. The Scheme will significantly improve bus services and facilities, ensure access for all users and provide a safe waiting environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) Note the Mansfield Bus Station and Mansfield Town Centre SQBP update
- 2) Approve the commencement of consultation on the introduction of SQBPs or VQBP in the Beeston and Worksop Town Centres.
- 3) Approve the use of LTP funds £108.8K to support the implementation of the SQBP/VQBP schemes in Beeston and Worksop Town centres; in addition to £20k of ongoing revenue funding from existing budgets.

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**For any enquiries about this report please contact:
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Constitutional Comments (SHB.16.12.13.)

39. Committee have power to decide the Recommendation.

Financial Comments (TR 19.12.13)

40. The financial implications are contained within the report.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Members and Affected

All Beeston/Chilwell Members
All Worksop Members