

21 May 2015

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, TRANSPORT, PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

LGA: PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONSORTIUM (PTC) SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

Purpose of the Report

1. To advise Committee of the contents of a Public Transport Consortium (PTC) briefing paper "Setting the Agenda for the Next Government".
2. To support the continued membership of the PTC.

Information and Advice

3. The PTC is a Special Interest Group within the Local Government Association which promotes public transport issues on behalf of Local Authorities, outside of the metropolitan areas, thus supporting effective local decisions on public transport for the benefit of local citizens. The main aims are to:
 - Have an understanding of local transport issues
 - Development of legislation
 - Allocation of resources

The PTC also has the influence to have an effective impact at national, regional and local level through:

- Direct lobbying of government and ministers
 - Engaging key partners such as transport operators
 - Raising awareness of emerging policy issues
 - Sharing best practice
4. Membership is open to all non-metropolitan and unitary authorities. The PTC has representatives from all the political parties which provide a balanced viewpoint based on the transport needs of non-metropolitan areas. The PTC is supported by a voluntary pool of Local Authority Transport Officers including Nottinghamshire. The County Council Chair and Vice chair are invited to the PTC meetings.

Setting the Agenda for the Next Government

5. In April 2015 the PTC circulated a document "Setting the Agenda for the Next Government" **Appendix 1**. The paper outlined the key part that buses, rail, transport

infrastructure and concessionary travel play in delivering an integrated transport system and their importance for local communities.

6. The PTC wishes to engage with Government and prospective parliamentary candidates and sought views on the funding issues listed at the end of the briefing paper. The Chairman, therefore, sent a positive response to the paper supporting its aspirations.
7. The Committee are, therefore, asked to note the response and agree to the continued membership of the PTC which has and will continue to provide a very active method of engaging with Government and a source of information regarding key transport issues.

Summary of Key Issues

8. A summary of the key policy and funding issues highlighted in the document are as follows, together with the Nottinghamshire position and future challenges:

- (i) Develop Local Bus Services:

The Council continues to support local bus provision prioritising access to employment, training and health facilities. Over the past 5 years the total spent by local authorities on supported bus services has reduced by £44.2m (15%) and this ongoing challenge has been addressed in Nottinghamshire through a managed approach to the review of supported local bus service contracts.

Sustained investment in bus stop facilities including shelters, real time information and associated maintenance means the council is ranked No. 1 nationally in the 2014 Passenger Focus Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey for satisfaction with the Bus Stop . This is discussed in more detail under Agenda Item 7. Reductions in Local Transport Plan funding for bus stops in 2015/16 will reduce the level of support for future provision and maintenance.

Bus Service punctuality is a key driver of bus service satisfaction in Nottinghamshire. Effective partnership working takes place between transport and highways with funding for local bus priority measures including bus stop clearways, traffic signal priority and the effective management of road works and civil parking enforcement.

- (ii) To fund the current concessionary fares scheme for those currently entitled:

The Council has contributed to discussions nationally with the Department for Transport regarding effective funding Concessionary Fares reimbursement arrangements for local authorities therefore recognising the social and economic benefits of the scheme.

The County Council countywide concessionary travel scheme is anticipated to cost £10.98m in 2015/2016 benefitting 164,000 residents undertaking nearly 11 million passenger journeys per year. The Council has proactively negotiated reimbursement arrangements for 2015/16. The scheme will include free travel for Nottinghamshire pass holders on the NET tram lines 2 and 3. Future scheme costs will be affected by usage of the tram and is recognised as a future funding pressure as part of the Budget Pressure Challenge.

Local bus fares in England increased by 58% in the past ten years compared to a 35% increase in the RPI. The Council's Integrated Ticketing Strategy and Delivery Plan will help to address the affordability of the bus, in particular for younger people.

- (iii) To create additional rail capacity urgently and invest in rail infrastructure:

Rail services in Nottinghamshire are an important part of the local transport network delivering important benefits for local communities.

Recent developments in Nottinghamshire include the opening of the Nottingham Station hub, served by the Robin Hood Line to Mansfield and Worksop, and line speed improvements on the Nottingham- Newark line.

The Council supports the LGA in that government give greater recognition of the role of the train in delivering their wider policies including investment for additional stations, more affordable ticket options and development of digital technology.

- (iv) Provide devolution to local authorities to use funding more flexibly, specifically for transport, as they see appropriate:

The Council provides £200K discretionary annual Grant Aid Support to Voluntary Car and Minibus schemes and this support is to be maintained for the next 3 years. The Council was recently successful with a bid to the government Total Transport Pilot Fund to help support better co-ordination and integration across providers including the community transport sector with the aim of recognising the cross sector benefits and realising future savings and better service provision. This will include a travel solutions hub with the potential to pool funding including top-up funding from other government departments and transport providers resulting in more effective commissioning of services.

Overall the Council supports the LGA that government give greater recognition of the role of the bus in delivering their wider policies which in turn will help local bus operators to invest and innovate.

Other Options Considered

- 9. None.

Environment & Sustainability

- 10. Public transport is vital for local communities, key to congestion management, improves air quality and reduces CO2 emissions.

Statutory and Policy Implications

- 11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. The PTC membership cost is provided for in the service budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) Committee notes the contents of the PTC paper "Setting the Agenda for the Next Government".
- 2) Supports the continued membership of the Public Transport Consortium.

Mark Hudson
Group Manager
Transport & Travel Services

For any enquiries about this report please contact:
Pete Mathieson
Team Manager
Commissioning & Policy

Constitutional Comments (LM 28/04/2015)

13. The Transport and Highways Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (TR 29/04/2015)

14. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

All

