

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR TRANSPORT, PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT

CHANGES TO THE LOCAL/COMMERCIAL BUS SERVICE NETWORK

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Committee of recent changes to the local and commercial bus service network and the actions taken by the Group Manager, Transport and Travel Services to cancel vary or replace services.

Information and Advice

2. The County Council has a duty (Transport Act 1985) to consider local needs and which supported bus services are necessary where there are no commercial services available. In 2015/16 £4.3m will be spent on supported bus services across the county.
3. Local bus services across the county are provided in two ways:
 - (i) Commercial services which operate without funding support
 - (ii) Supported services which are subsidised by the Council

All bus services must be registered, giving a minimum of 56 days' notice to the Traffic Commissioner, who administers and manages the local bus service registration and performance service. Bus operators must also send copies of the new registrations, variations and cancellations at the same time to the County Council. On most occasions bus operators give the County Council advance notice of their intentions so that decisions on any intervention can be taken and the public notified at the earliest opportunity.

4. This regular report advises Committee of changes to the local bus network and provides information of related operational decisions made by the Group Manager, Transport and Travel Services to replace vary or cancel services. The Committee should note that these operational decisions are due to the urgency involved in reacting to the decisions made by bus companies particularly when they impact on local bus and school transport services. Furthermore, any decisions made in this regard have followed discussions with local County Councillors and other stakeholders.
5. Trentbarton in partnership with the County Council have proposed a revised network of services in the Bingham area. This followed a comprehensive round of local consultation

with Parishes and Local Members and includes an evening service for villages in the Vale of Belvoir which will be commercially provided on a trial basis. It is intended that the new Rushcliffe Mainline and Rushcliffe Villager services will replace the Rushcliffe Greens on 30 August. This will be supported by comprehensive publicity and marketing to promote greater use of local bus services. The County Council currently supports this network with £130k from the local bus budget.

6. A number of changes to other services in the Bingham, Vale of Belvoir area are also currently being discussed. These will replace existing services 850, 851, 853 and 863 with three revised services which will also cover the Barleylands area of Ruddington and Upper Saxondale which will both lose their commercially provided services. It is expected that this will cost an additional £30k from the local bus support budget. It is intended to implement the revised services on 30 August.
7. A revised network of services was introduced in NE Bassetlaw on 20 April in partnership with Stagecoach East Midlands as part of the budget efficiencies programme saving £63k per year from the local bus support budget. The new network maintains access to all key services and also introduced a new NE Bassetlaw link between Doncaster and Gainsborough for communities in the north of the County. It is hoped that this will improve access to employment and education for this area. A formal launch of the network was held in Retford on 26 June attended by Cllr Skelding and Cllr Place.
8. The new Beeston Tram and Bus Station is due to open on July 12th which will require a number of changes to the commercial bus network. At present operators have not confirmed their plans and Transport & Travel Services are working with all parties to minimise any disruption. A number of promotional events are planned in Beeston in partnership with bus service operators, NET and the City Council. Full details of the revised services will be covered in a later report.

Reasons for Recommendations

9. The recommendation and continued financial support meets the objectives of promoting public transport, reducing congestion, promoting economic recovery and offers travel choice.

Statutory and Policy Implications

10. 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 Service Users

11. The provision of local bus services enables users to access key services, jobs, training and leisure. The arrangements detailed above have been made to ensure access to the key priorities of employment, education, health and essential shopping.

Financial Implications

12. The costs (£30k) relating to the changes to local bus services outlined in this report have been contained within the allocated budget for 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- 1) Note the report regarding changes to the supported and local and bus service networks.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (SJE 24/06/2015)

13. As this report is simply to be noted by Committee, Constitutional Comments are not required.

Financial Comments (TMR 24/06/2015)

14. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 12 of 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 Divisions and Members Affected

All