

Integrated Transport Thematic Group Meeting

2pm Thursday 14 October 2009, Committee Room 1

Attendance

Chair: Cllr Martin Forshaw (WLBC), Martin Trengove (CVS), Tim Gornall (LCC), Peter Bradford (WLDC), Roger Bell (OPSTA), Francis Carragher (Edge Hill), Denise Knowle (for Andrew Varley, LCC)

In attendance: Chris Loader (Network Strategy Officer, GMPTE), David Jones (Head of Passenger Travel, Merseytravel), Elaine Winrow (Community Transport Co-ordinator, LCC), Cllr McKay (WLBC – observing), Alison Grimes (LSP Secretariat)

1. Apologies

Steve Coveney (CLPCT), Tony Moreton (LCC), Andrew Varley (LCC).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Enclosure 1)

Page 5 – minutes recorded that LCC had submitted a bid of £430K, this should read £472K.

Other than this amendment, the minutes of the meeting of 15.07.09 were agreed as accurate.

3. Matters Arising

- **Press release for 315 Service**

Tim Gornall reported that the press release had gone out. LCC was grateful to Parish Councillors who had helped distribute leaflets about the service. In the last 4-week period use was at 1600 and this was nearly at the 40% funding requirement.

- **Response to issues raised by the Older People's Partnership Board**
Responses sent as per minutes.

- **Contact with Network Rail**

Network Rail had looked into at sending someone but not been able to.

- **Membership - Letters to Ormskirk partnership and Cllr McKay**

These had been distributed as per minutes. It was decided that the Ormskirk Partnership should not need to attend meetings as they are a group in their own right.

- **Connecting communities rail report**

Peter Bradford, Cllr Forshaw and Roger Bell were to have discussed the Borough Council's response. PB and RB had spoken by phone. Cllr Forshaw to have discussion.

Action: discussion to happen

4. Action plan progress: review and update – Tim Gornall, Denise Knowle (Enclosure 2)

Action 1 - Increasing awareness of existing services: Denise Knowle

Focus on providing publicity concerning finding out information rather than timetables being developed or published, eg. West Lancs by Bus, Z-card. Newburgh Parish Council has agreed to act as a representative to feedback to other Parish Councils. Parish Councils sent information to put onto websites. Changes to bus timetables sent to papers for publication.

Martin Forshaw commented that it was good that the publicity was focussed on raising awareness of information sources rather than specific timetables etc.

Ian Gill raised the issue of supplying bike racks on buses – and also that WLDC had supplied one at the cost of 2-3 K in previous years and not had it returned. Tim Gornall stated that in principal bike racks would be supported, but that it was a funding issues. He would look into trying to locate the missing rack!

Action: Tim Gornall – to track the rack.

Action 2 – Improvements to Public Transport: Tim Gornall

There has been increased access to public transport especially in the Holmeswood area. This has been facilitated with the help of the Wetland Trust that has applied for RDPE funding. Rosie Cooper MP has been asked to support this application.

Bickerstaffe is another area looked at for improvement of services but there are no resources available yet. However, the daily 319 service has been introduced around the Four Lane Ends area which goes to St Helens.

There has been an extension of Arriva services into the Tanhouse area following the demise of Click.

5. Links with adjoining areas – Chris Loader, GMPTE and David Jones, Merseytravel

Chris Loader explained that West Lancs was in the middle of links to Liverpool, Manchester and Wigan. Managing passenger flows into three different areas could be difficult. Rail planning is all about long-term vision and there are processes in place to include interboundary travel. Travel has changed significantly both for leisure and work since 1968 and the current PTEs don't necessarily cater for current travel styles.

David Jones stated that Merseytravel has good performance for its services into Ormskirk. They are currently carrying out a study on the feasibility of the Burscough Curves either through opening up a direct extension of Ormskirk-Southport, or alternatively Southport-Preston. Hoping to have a draft report ready at the start of November.

There is a great deal of interest in establishing rail links into Skelmersdale, but possibility that the electrification programme may take some funding that could have been available for this.

Martin Forshaw asked if it was reasonable to hope that a Skelmersdale train link could be achieved in 15 years. David Jones said it was, but funding was the issue. Funding for it would likely come from the Regional Funding Allocation, and this was already all accounted for up until 2013.

Ian Gill commented that the Burscough and Skelmersdale proposals were important for the development of the Core Strategy. What would happen if a study showed Skelmersdale more favourable than Burscough?

DJ responded that Burscough was probably nearer than Skelmersdale – which still needed a strong business case to be made – but funding for Burscough also unavailable until at least 2013. If a report into Skelmersdale showed it to be more attractive, then this could take precedence.

Peter Bradford queried that in the Connecting Communities report a Skelmersdale 'feasibility study' was referred to – where would this originate? DJ confirmed that someone needs to drive it – the fact that it appears in print doesn't mean it will happen. Probably looking at £50K. Will take the expression of interest back to Merseytravel, as it would be their link, but an external organisation will need to push for the study. Group discussed that this needs to be WLBC and the study to cover a review of the benefits vs costs. PB asked Tim Gornall to see if LCC would be able to help at all.

Action: TG to sound out relevant LCC area with regards to Skelmersdale rail link business case development.

6. Connecting Communities Rail Report: LSP response / WLBC contact – Peter Bradford (Enclosures 3a and 3b)

Pete Bradford presented the response from the LSP that had been sent and the holding/thank you letter received.

Roger Bell commented that the feeling of a recent OPSTA meeting had been strongly in favour of the Skelmersdale link going into the centre of the town, although the most expensive option. David Jones said that the only way to determine the value of the options is to carry out the detailed study.

Ian Gill stated that there had been some work done a number of years ago by Sinclair, Knight, Merz that suggested the Skelmersdale Interchange and Kirkby link as a preferred option.

Pete Bradford queried the prospect of electrification through Wigan. David Jones confirmed that it was in the Merseytravel strategy, but financing was an issue, despite the governments electrification programme.

Action: Ian Gill to send the study to David Jones

7. Community Car scheme – Elaine Winrow

Elaine distributed a report detailing which schemes were funded by LCC. She also highlighted that the main issue was a lack of volunteers in specific areas. This seemed to be a problem peculiar to West Lancs. Twice a year there is a publicity drive for volunteers and there is a recruitment action plan with various actions for distribution of information including posters at LCC buildings, jobcentres, and use of parish councils. A big issue is that volunteers don't like the 'observed drive' precursor to signing up, although along with the vehicle check this only takes around an hour and a quarter. Even if 'failing' the drive, it would not affect driving licence.

Volunteers must be from the area that they would service, due to LCCs payment criteria of the scheme. Often getting volunteers but from the wrong location. Tarleton is especially problematic to service.

Martin Trengove offered for CVS to run the advert every other week if required.

Martin Forshaw asked to be informed of where the volunteers came from after the next publicity drive, which is not yet completed.

Action: Elaine Winrow to let Pete Bradford know.

8. Update on Phoenix Business Plan Development – Martin Trengove (Enclosure 4)

The independent research has been completed and employers broadly support the proposed scheme. Out of a small sample of 104 employees, 60% were in favour. In the draft business plan, LCC is asking for Kickstart funding for 3 years from the government. CVS believe that ideally the funding should be for five years, with the aim of breaking even in year 6. Even this may be conservative. S.106 funding will therefore be needed for years 4 and 5, and this would be requested from WLBC.

LCC are yet to hear anything on the Kickstart funding – hope to hear in "the Autumn". If none forthcoming, then the business plan will need to be totally redone.

WLBC will not be approached for s.106 funding until after the Kickstart funding is known about and LCC has also carried out a finance review of the business plan from a bus operators point of view.

Following this, an independent financial analysis would be carried out on the plan as per the requirements of the LSP Second Homes funding agreement for the project.

The business plan is based on a social enterprise model. This means that there needs to be a volunteer board to run the operation as a business. There is plenty of community interest, but not with the required skills to undertake an Executive role. Getting volunteers to sit on the Board is proving difficult.

Action: Martin Trengove – to forward business plan to Tony Moreton for review by his team

9. Community Transport: Review of Designated Bodies for Section 19 Permits: Consultation Document – Peter Bradford

Deadline for responses was today. Agreed that it was supported in principal.

Action: Pete Bradford to respond as appropriate.

10. Smart and Integrated Ticketing Consultation – Peter Bradford (Enclosure 5)

Agreed that it needed to be brought in. Agreed that it was supported.

Action: Pete Bradford to respond as appropriate.

11. Northern Route Utilisation Strategy – Peter Bradford (Enclosure 6)

Peter Bradford outlined the holding letter from Network Rail.

Chris Loader explained various regional RUS's will be drawn into a Northern England RUS and that the final format of this is yet to be decided but is due for publication in 2012, following consultation. The Northern RUS will then be used as a strong document to go to the Department of Transport prior to the next railway financial control period being set in 2019.

12. WLBC motion for a PTE on the Lancashire boundaries – Peter Bradford (Enclosure 7)

The council motion was highlighted. Enclosure 7 a, a copy of the letters to and from LCC were tabled. Chris Loader explained that the Secretary of State was able to consider requests from Authorities to change PTE boundaries and there was no reason why a nearby authority couldn't ask to be included in an existing PTE.

13. Sustainable Communities Act Skelmersdale transport proposal – A Grimes (Enclosure 8)

Alison Grimes highlighted that the SCA proposal from the council was 'a show of support' for additional funding needed for rail and bus services in Skelmersdale.

14. Information Exchange

Ian Gill reminded the group that the WLBC Core Strategy was currently out for consultation and that comments were now due in. WLBC keen to receive comments from key organisations and prepared to defer the closing date to accommodate this where possible and with agreement.

Roger Bell highlighted the opening of the Burscough Bridge Community Café as a good place to meet and also that drop-in help will soon be available from Age Concern, CVS and Help Direct. It is a good information distribution outlet.

15. Any other business

None

16. Date and Time of next Meeting

Wednesday, 20 January 2010, 2pm (Venue: Committee Room 1, 52 Derby Street)