

Integrated Transport Thematic Group Meeting

Wednesday 16th June 2010, 10am, Committee Rooms 2&3

Attendance

Chair: Cllr Martin Forshaw (WLBC), Ian Gill (WLBC), Gillian Whitfield (WLBC), Ashley Weir (LCC), Denise Nowell (LCC), Greg Swift (WLCVS), Roger Bell (OPSTA), Steve Coveney (CLPCT), Dominic Carr (WLBC).

1. Apologies

Tony Moreton (LCC), Andrew Varley (LCC), Geoff Wilding (Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust), Martin Trengove (CVS), Tim Gornall (LCC), Francis Carragher (Edge Hill), Peter Blakey (WLBC), Richard Watts (LCC).

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Page 1 – Item 3, Action Peter Bell should read Roger Bell.

Other than this amendment, the minutes of the meeting of 20.01.10 were agreed as accurate.

3. Matters Arising

- Skelmersdale rail link business case development.

Dominic Carr gave a brief update regarding the proposed Skelmersdale rail link explaining that although the scheme has been a long standing aspiration of the Council it is a scheme we hope to see realised. He advised that the Council are working with partners Merseytravel, Merseyrail, Nertwork Rail and Lancashire County Council to commission a report that will prove there is a business case for the link. All partners are fully behind the scheme and have agreed a budget to get the work carried out. Consultants Steer Davies Gleave will be appointed by the end on June to conduct the initial demand study. If the study proves that there is a business case for the proposal the Council along with partners will then seek to conduct a Guide to Railway Investment Projects 1 (GRIP 1) study which will examine the feasibility of the different proposals on a technical level.

Chair asked about the capital costs in terms of deliverability. Ian Gill confirmed this had not yet been established and would be dependent upon which station is chosen as the most viable option. Greg Swift asked if the station at Upholland, which s currently of a poor standard, could be improved and a park and ride installed. Ian Gill advised that this option would be considered as part of the Grip1 study but there are some issues with this option due to the peripheral location. Dominic Carr confirmed that the likely timescales would be 6-9 months for initial demand study but the Grip1 could be 1-2 years due to Network Rails current work commitments and capabilities.

4. Action plan progress: review and update

Please see accompanying action plan document (enclosure 2) and strategy development update (enclosure 3) which makes reference to the production of the leaflets.

Discussion took place between Roger Bell and Ashley Weir regarding the quality of the stage coach service replacing the Cumfy Bus service which was subsidised by LCC. Roger considered it had resulted in reduced patronage but agreed to discuss in another forum outside of the group.

Roger Bell requested if it was possible to obtain monitoring data from the bus operators and Ashley Weir confirmed this would be possible.

Steve Coveney was concerned that all areas of transport would be hit with budget cuts and questioned if there had been any indications of implications to services. Ashley Weir advised nothing had been confirmed in terms of specific lines but we may need to look at services with low demand for future cuts.

Chair commented that it was interesting to see how a simple leaflet like that at Newburgh could increase demand and that this could be useful if we are to safeguard some of our rural bus links.

Action Ashley Weir – Obtain monitoring information from Stage Coach.

Action Denise Nowell – Send a copy of the update report electronically to be circulated to the group by Gillian Whitfield.

Action Denise Nowell – Send a copy of the bus changes leaflet to Gillian Whitfield who can then circulate to Ward Councillors in order to raise awareness.

5. Update on Phoenix Business Plan Development

As the kickstart bid was unsuccessful a decision needs to be made on the future of the scheme. Greg Swift produced and circulated an LSP update on the Phoenix Community Transport (enclosure 4) and a financial update (enclosure 5). Greg asked for a decision to be taken by the group regarding the remaining £2943. Does the group want the funding returned or can it be used to pursue the scheme by circulating the letter (enclosure 6) which has been drafted to approach and engage with partners. This is necessary as the expertise within the group has since been lost and assistance is vital.

Ian Gill advised that the Section 106 funds which have been secured for transport schemes (around £200,000), will only be made available if it can be proved that it would be a sustainable investment and would therefore require a viable business plan. Chair expressed his concern given the timescales left to use the section 106 funding and the time already spent on this project. It would be unlikely that any further funding could be made available and in his view the financing should be linked with LCC or an existing commercial service who have expertise to support it. The remaining money should be returned as it was not given for any other scheme and the group would not have the authority to agree.

Ian Gill asked if the scheme would be fundamentally different. Greg Swift clarified that the letter would aim to get the involvement of a commercial operator to ensure its sustainability. The research has identified the need so the scheme would not be vastly different but the business plan would have to change to include Section 106 and potentially LCC who have offered 2 minibuses.

Roger Bell advised that the Community Transport Association are assisting with schemes in Burscough and there may be an opportunity to make some linkages. Could the scheme be parked until both parties have met with the CTA?

Ashley Weir offered the services of the Community Transport Manager at LCC.

Greg Swift advised that as yet no interest has been shown from LCC but would welcome the opportunity to engage both LCC and CTA.

Ashley Weir asked what the position is now with the Community Transport and dial a ride? Chair agreed to meet with the Group Manager to discuss. Greg Swift was concerned that this may restrict the service to times of the day. Ashley Weir advised the times would be flexible and written into the contract.

Steve Coveney suggested that the point of the proposal being run by local people for local people may have hindered the project getting the kick start funding. Greg Swift advised he had not received any feedback so was unsure.

Action All - Take the issue away and read the report before making a decision.

Action Ashley Weir - Take the issue back to the Community Transport Team and Tim Gornall for advice.

Action Martin Forshaw (Chair) - Take the proposal to Members to get the view of the Borough Council.

Action Ian Gill – Schedule meeting with the Community Transport Group Manager to discuss Dial A ride.

6. Sustainable Communities Act

Nothing to report

7. Information Exchange

Nothing to report

8. Any Other Business

Roger Bell informed the group that Mersey Rail had approached him regarding a marketing campaign request for West Lancashire and although he is aware of places to go in Burscough was unsure of the attractions in Ormskirk. So far he had received little help from the contacts at the Council and Asked the group for advice and assistance. Chair suggested contacting Colin Brady (Ormskirk Market), Ian Bond (Heritage assets) and Edwina Lea in any event as a good starting point. Greg Swift also suggested Ormskirk Partnership may be able to help.

Ian Gill asked Roger Bell if there was a Mersey travel update since last meeting? Roger agreed to chase this.

Steve Coveney advised the group that the PCT had produced a sustainability plan and transport features highly.

Action Steve Coveney – Forward the Sustainability Plan to Gillian Whitfield to circulate.

Action Roger Bell – Chase Mersey Travel regarding update.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Meeting to be scheduled around October November, date to be finalised in next 6 weeks.

Action Gillian Whitfield – Schedule meeting in next 6 weeks.