



ARTICLE NO: 1F

**CORPORATE & ENVIRONMENTAL
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**MEMBERS UPDATE 2014/15
ISSUE: 1**

Article of: Assistant Director Planning

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Contact for further information: Mr D Carr (Extn. 5194)
(E-mail: dominic.carr@westlancs.gov.uk)

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES ACROSS WEST LANCASHIRE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

- 1.1 To provide Members with a copy of the Council's official response to Lancashire County Council's consultation to remove subsidised bus services across Lancashire, including services in West Lancashire and to update Members regarding the current position of this proposal.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 20th December 2013 Lancashire County Council contacted West Lancashire Borough Council to inform us that due to local government finance settlement and existing budget pressures, the County Council had to consider making changes to the way services are delivered. We were also informed that as part of proposals being considered they were considering reducing the amount of money being spent to subsidise bus services by withdrawing the funding to subsidised bus services during the evening and on Sundays. They also said that they were considering proposals for non-replacement of future deregistered commercial services. As part of this consultation exercise, the Council were asked to provide views regarding these proposals by the 10th January. This deadline was later extended to the 17th January due to the Christmas break.
- 2.2 In relation to services in West Lancashire, the proposed changes included the removal of a number evening and weekend services. A full list of the services to be removed has been provided within Appendix A (attached).. Following notification of this consultation an email was sent out to all Members on the 23rd December seeking their views regarding the proposed service cuts and informing them that due to the relatively short response period and being over the Christmas break, a response would be agreed with the Planning Portfolio Holder and reported back via a Members Update.

2.3 Comments were received back from Members which were incorporated into the Council's official response which can be seen within Appendix B. Although the Council acknowledged the budgetary pressures being faced by the County Council, we raised a number of concerns regarding the proposed removal of these services.

2.4 The main areas of concern we raised included:

- The effect removing evening services from Skelmersdale, Burscough and Ormskirk would have upon the night time economy of the towns.
- How the proposals may make West Lancashire less attractive than neighbouring authorities to attracting investment
- How the proposals could reduce access to employment and education for many residents
- How the proposals could impact upon further educational establishments in West Lancashire
- How the proposals could impact upon the Council's proposals to redevelop Skelmersdale Town Centre
- How the proposals could limit access to the main adult and children's hospitals in West Lancashire and further afield
- How the removal of services in rural areas could increase rural isolation, particularly amongst elderly and disabled people.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

3.1 On the 10th February the Council received a letter from Lancashire County Council thanking us for our consultation response and informing us that the *"Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport has listened carefully to the many views expressed in support of retaining the evening, Sunday and Bank Holiday services subsidised by LCC. As a result of the consultation process, the removal of subsidies to these services will not be going ahead. It is now intended to review each route when individual contracts are considered for renewal over the next few years"*.

4.0 FUTURE ACTION

4.1 Officers will continue to liaise with officers at Lancashire County Council and where appropriate make further consultation responses when individual contracts for bus services are considered for renewal.

5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS / COMMUNITY STRATEGY

5.1 Given the outcome of the consultation, there are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report, in particular, no significant impacts on crime and disorder.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this article

7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to the risk register as a result of this report.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Article.

Equality Impact Assessment

The Article is for information only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix A: Copy of document sent by Lancashire County Council showing which bus services in West Lancashire may be under review.

Appendix B: Copy of the Council's official response to the consultation exercise.