



APPENDIX

AGENDA ITEM: 5(a)(3)

**CABINET:
20 JANUARY 2009**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Forshaw

**Contact for further information: Mrs Cathryn A Jackson (Extn. 5016)
(E-mail: cathryn.jackson@westlancsdc.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN BICKERSTAFFE

Wards affected: Bickerstaffe

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the request of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to public and community transport in Bickerstaffe.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the request of the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the needs of Bickerstaffe ward in relation to the Council's work on/input into community transport provision in the context of the comments of the Interim Policy Services Manager contained at paragraph 4, be considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 3 December 2008 the Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an item at the request of a Member in relation to Public and Community Transport in Bickerstaffe and resolved as follows:

“49. PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN BICKERSTAFFE

This item had been included on the Agenda at the request of Councillor Cotterill who explained in his notice to the item that in the “. . . recent WSP report on public transport in West Lancashire, commissioned by West Lancashire LSP, Bickerstaffe Ward is the ‘most inaccessible’ ward in the District, (along with

Great Altcar and Holmeswood areas).” He also stated that “the current KDFP makes reference to plans for community transport development in Skelmersdale,” and that there was a “commuted sum available for transport in respect of XL Business Park, Lathom and “therefore potential to link need to opportunity in this case.”

The Interim Policy Services Manager explained that the WSP study had included reference to access and accessibility to services in rural areas by public transport and that many areas, including Bickerstaffe and Crawford were the lowest for access to public transport. He explained that a Thematic Group was looking into the issues referred to and were expected to report back in March 2009 and confirmed that options for the use of commuted sums from developers for alternative methods of transport (including a community based demand responsive service) in the Skelmersdale area had already been the subject of a report to Cabinet and a further report is due to be presented to Cabinet in January 2009. He referred to the presentation to Members on the Community Transport Scheme, which had taken place on 4 November 2008, when Members were able to ask questions and give feedback to the project’s steering group.

He also explained the issues in relation to the XL Business Park and terms of the legal requirement for the developer to pay a commuted sum over five years to fund a proposed shuttle bus link to Skelmersdale Town Centre. He explained that it may be possible, subject to Cabinet approval, to use this sum to support the Community Transport proposal and it may also be possible to extend that service to rural areas including Bickerstaffe.

At the conclusion of the discussion the motion put forward by Councillor Cotterill in the notice to the item was moved and seconded.

RESOLVED: A. That Cabinet/Council consider the needs of Bickerstaffe ward in relation to the council’s work on/input into community transport provision.”

4.0 COMMENTS OF THE INTERIM POLICY SERVICES MANAGER

- 4.1 To provide some context the West Lancashire Integrated Transport Review published in May 2008 found that public transport “provision varies greatly across the district, and significantly lower levels of provision can be found in parts of West Lancashire, in particular in the north and south west of the district”. One of the recommendations of the review is that there is a potential opportunity to introduce a demand-responsive employment bus service in Skelmersdale.
- 4.2 The idea of a Community-based Demand Responsive transport service in Skelmersdale is being promoted by the local community and Lancashire County Council. This was been mentioned in the report to Cabinet on 17 June 2008 concerning the use of commuted sums for alternative forms of transport. A presentation to members was held on 4 November and it was explained that to achieve government grant aid there is a need for further public finance and a request is to be made to use some of the commuted sums. This request was due to be considered by Cabinet on 20 January but has been deferred to allow more time for the business case to be revised and to be independently assessed.

4.3 Whilst the Demand Responsive service could serve areas outside of Skelmersdale, such as Bickerstaffe it is not possible to make that decision before a decision is taken on how it will be financed and who will operate it. However I have no objection to Cabinet suggesting that the promoters of the service be requested to consider the needs of surrounding areas including Bickerstaffe.

4.4 As a way forward it is recommended:

“That the Interim Planning Policy Manager refers to the need to consider transport needs of the rural communities in his reports to Cabinet concerning the proposed Community Demand Responsive bus service in Skelmersdale and the Community Transport Action Plan for West Lancashire.”

Background Documents

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

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

None