

Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Report submitted by: Head of Service, Public and Integrated Transport
Date: 8 December 2016

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
All

Assessment and Priority Policy for Public Transport Services in Lancashire
(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Executive Summary

This report recommends the introduction of an Assessment and Priority Policy for Public Transport Services in Lancashire.

This report also recommends the extension of the existing tendered bus service network for a further 12 months until 31st March 2018 to allow more time to examine and evaluate potential alternative public transport solutions, and to allow Parish/Community groups to consider their options for service delivery.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the proposed Assessment and Priority Policy for Public Transport Services in Lancashire as set out at Appendix 'A'.
- (ii) Approve the extension of the existing LCC tendered bus service network for a further 12 months until 31st March 2018.

Background and Advice

Following the decision of Full Council on the level of funding for tendered bus services, in February 2016, the Leader of the County Council approved a proposal to establish a Cabinet Working Group on Bus Services to consider the impact of, and make recommendations to, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the allocation of the £2m per annum budget allocated to support parish and community based transport provision.

In March 2016, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport approved recommendations from the Cabinet Working Group on Bus Services in respect of a number of tendered bus service replacements across Lancashire that came into effect from 3 April 2016, for a minimum of period of one year. The decision to maintain a revised tendered bus service network, utilised the allocation of a £2m per annum budget to support parish and community based transport provision, devised to ensure that residents in rural locations, together with any specifically disadvantaged groups would be supported in accessing employment, education, health and other essential services, where possible.

The council's Public Transport Team continues to work with county councillors, district councils, parish councils and local communities to ensure these tendered bus services are meeting the local needs and to adapt them, on an ongoing basis where possible, within the level of funding available. The Team is also willing to work with stakeholders to establish alternative public transport solutions to ensure links with the overall bus network in Lancashire.

In line with the agreed Budget Option, the allocation of £2m per annum to support parish and community based transport provision is in place for the 2017/2018 financial year. The proposed extension of the council's existing tendered bus service network for a further 12 months until 31st March 2018 will allow more time to examine and evaluate possible alternative models of delivery for public transport. This will ensure residents in rural locations, together with any specifically disadvantaged groups continue to be supported in accessing employment, education, health and other essential services.

In May 2016, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport requested that officers draw up a Policy for the process of replacing a withdrawn commercial public transport service in Lancashire. .

The proposed Assessment and Priority Policy for Public Transport Services in Lancashire is set out at Appendix 'A'.

The council's current schedule of individual tendered bus service contracts, set out at Appendix 'B'.

Consultations

All County Councillors were consulted on the implementation of the tendered bus service network proposed for consideration by the Cabinet Working Group and their views were taken into account in developing the existing tendered bus service network.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Without the introduction of a policy document to support how the council assesses public transport services, such as the withdrawal of a commercial public transport service, it will be difficult to assess and prioritise decision making for any future support and implementation of tendered public transport in Lancashire.

Without the extension for a further 12 months of the individual tendered bus service contracts, a number of areas of Lancashire would no longer be served by any form of public transport and there would be an impact on examining and evaluating possible alternative public transport solutions.

Financial

The allocation of a £2m per annum budget to support parish and community based transport provision is in place for the 2017/2018 financial year to cover the extension of the existing tendered bus service network for a further 12 months until 31st March 2018.

Procurement

A framework agreement is in place for the procurement of Local and School Bus Services in Lancashire. All contracts were procured under this Framework by mini-competitions for 1 year, from 4 April 2016 to 1 April 2017, with an option to extend for a further period such that the contract length shall not exceed 8 years. The extension of the existing contracts will be contained within an agreed individual contract extension in accordance with the terms of the framework agreement.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport - 'Revised Criteria for Assessing Subsidised Bus Services'	9 December 2014	Dave Gorman/ (01772) 534261
Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport – 'Recommendations of the Cabinet Working Group on Bus Services - Bus Service Replacement Proposals '	8 March 2016	Dave Gorman/ (01772) 534261

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A