

Item 8b - Update on Parish Bus Scheme

Lancashire County Council (LCC) is currently considering the introduction of a policy which would see the provision of capital funding for the purchase/lease of minibuses or similar vehicles and their operation by Parish Councils to provide passenger transport services to their local communities. LCC would maintain the vehicles whilst the Parish Councils would cover the operating costs such as drivers, fuel and management of operations.

This policy would complement a review of all supported bus services within the county which is being undertaken separately, the outcome of which may be a reduction in the provision of subsidised bus services in certain locations where they are unsustainable.

LCC is currently developing the following areas of work in order to inform its decision;

- Development of a policy for Parish based passenger transport services, including purchase/lease/operation/maintenance of vehicles and the potential costs associated with such a policy.
- A SWOT analysis of providing such vehicles.
- The economic model for a parish council operating on this basis
- Provide a guidance document for Parish Councils of what would be required of them to operate such a scheme
- How LCC would ensure the most effective and efficient use of vehicles under such a policy.
- How Parish based passenger transport services would support, interface or be part of the County Council's community transport provision.
- How Parish based passenger transport services would interface with the commercial and subsidised bus network.
- What licences could Parish based passenger transport services be operated under and an outline of the advantages and disadvantages.
- Compare examples of good practise from elsewhere in the UK and in Europe.
- How Parishes could develop communications plans to inform their citizens of these services.
- Provide advice regarding alternative solutions for Parish based sustainable transport with examples of existing schemes.

It is anticipated this initial piece of work will be completed by end-March 2015.

