
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday 19 November 2019 between 7.30pm and 7.57pm.

Councillors present:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development)	
Andrew Scarth (Lead Member for Housing)	
Margaret Hofman	Reena Ranger
Tony Humphreys	Peter Getkahn
Joanna Clemens	Joan King
Stephanie Singer	

Officers Present: Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Peter Simons, Senior Transport Planner
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst in the Chair

IHED 28/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Drury and David Raw.

IHED 29/19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting held on 19 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

IHED 30/19 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency for the following reasons:

REPORT PROPOSING AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE

To enable the Council to consider the budget implications as part of the Councils budget setting process.

IHED 31/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

IHED 32/19 REPORT PROPOSING AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE

The report advised that Three Rivers supported one of the two community transport buses run by Hertfordshire County Council for Three Rivers District. This service is called "Dial-a-Ride" and provides a similar service to a wheelchair-accessible taxi, providing door-to-door transport to elderly and disabled people at a subsidised rate, with fares that are less expensive than private taxi fares. It does not provide trips for specifically medical purposes but for shopping, social events and therapy (see Appendix B, page 4).

This proposal would reallocate Council funding for this second Dial-a-Ride bus and instead fund a scheduled shopper service, which collects people from their homes in a different settlement each day and takes them to a specific large retail centre, as set out in the Appendix A (Part II).

The Dial-a-Ride service had recently been subject to a consultation relating to increased fees for users and due also to recent changes to the Better Buses Programme to include support for a further local bus service (the R9) that focusses on shopper provision. The Lead Member had requested investigation into how services overall could be improved.

The proposal (detailed in Appendix A – Part II) shows how a local non-profit organisation would be able to provide a regular weekly service to connect key local settlements with major retail centres (primarily but not only supermarkets).

The Chairman outlined the proposal and advised that the budgetary implications were that an additional £6k may be required to support the service. This type of service had been run very successfully in Hertsmere. The contract with Herts County Council (HCC), for the second Dial-a-Ride service, would need to be terminated with 6 months' notice required to be given. He moved, duly seconded, the recommendations as outlined in Paragraphs 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3 of the report.

A Member asked what services Council's in Hertfordshire provide. The Senior Transport Planner advised that St Albans District Council provided taxi vouchers up to £100 a year and Welwyn and Hatfield District Council run their own buses. This new service would be providing links to supermarkets from settlements which did not currently have a local supermarket. This proposal had been put forward to the Council and would provide very good value. The statutory Dial a Ride service would be unchanged and would still be available for other trips.

The proposed service would provide a shopping service, five days a week, connecting each settlement with a major retail location. Each trip would be up to three hours, for up to 14 passengers per trip allowing the same user groups as those served by the Dial-a-ride service. This service would provide for 28-40 trips a day whereas Dial-a-ride was under 20.

A Member asked if the Council would be able to stipulate the timings for the service and the length of time the shoppers had. The Senior Transport Planner said that the CVS, who ran the service in St Albans and Hertsmere, were flexible on the timings but it was anticipated they would be 3 hour round trips allowing for 1 to 1.5 hours shopping. Disabled or elderly people could be accompanied by their buddies as they were keen to make sure the service provided what the users needed.

A Member asked how many people used the service to the Tesco supermarket from South Oxhey, if the service could call at other supermarkets such as Aldi and Lidl and how much the service would cost to use. The Senior Transport Planner advised that the costs would be looked into as part of the proposal and where the service went to was negotiable.

A Member said although it would cost slightly more than the current service, it looked a good idea. They asked if we knew how much more the service would cost. The Senior Transport Planner replied that the service currently operated in other Districts, to very similar standards to Dial-a-Ride, using low-floor buses to collect users. The vehicles had 14 seats and could accommodate 5 wheel chair users. Drivers were paid, and were not volunteers, to ensure that they were always available. The service would be for people over 75 or registered disabled.

A Member asked if a study had been undertaken on the new service and if it would meet the user's needs. The Senior Transport Planner advised that data had been obtained and Appendix B to the report illustrated how the users used the Dial-a-Ride service in 2018/19 and what trips they made. From the data obtained we were aware that there was a lot of elderly people in Chorleywood, Kings Langley and South Oxhey who did not have a bus to take them to the local shops and had requested this service.

A Member hoped that the new service would be able to accommodate mobility scooters as the Dial-a-Ride vehicles were not big enough to accommodate them.

A Member asked if the service could be flexible to take people into Rickmansworth or experience other shopping centres in the District and if details could be provided to the Pensioners Forum who could access the service to attend the Forum meetings.

The Council had requested HCC put the TRDC logo on the Dial-a-ride buses, as one of the few authorities to give financial assistance to the County Council, but no action had been taken by them.

Members asked if logos could be placed on the buses indicating they were being supported by the Council and if electric vehicles could be negotiated as part of the proposal.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee agrees to reallocate the existing funding from the additional discretionary Dial-a-Ride bus to a new community shopper service and also recommends to Policy and Resources Committee that an additional budget of £6,220 be committed to the new community shopper service.
2. That the Committee determines to delegate the decision to procure and award a service to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development and Transport.
3. That public access to Appendix A be denied until the contract is awarded.

IHED 33/19 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee reviewed the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

IHED 34/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

IHED 35/19 PROPOSAL FOR AN IMPROVED COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE

The Committee considered Appendix A to item 5 on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That public access to Appendix A be denied until the contract is awarded.

CHAIRMAN