

North Yorkshire County Council**11 November 2015****Transport, Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Chairman's Statement**

1. My statement for this full council includes details of the Committee meeting held on 14 October 2015.

Committee – 14 OctoberBus subsidy reduction

2. The Committee received the bus subsidy reduction proposals to reduce the budget for subsidising bus services to £1.5m each year and the results of the consultation. We assessed the consultation responses and also took questions from members of the public concerned about the proposals.
3. In some of the areas affected the County Council has worked successfully with bus operators to identify subsidised services that could be provided on a commercial basis. It has also worked with communities to evaluate tenders and find out what if any changes could be made to the existing bus timetable to increase passenger take-up. Where this has not been possible measures have and are continuing to be taken to put in place other transport solutions. Greater use will be made of Community Transport provision, though there are parts of the county where the sector does not have the capacity to take on more services. The County Council is also using its own fleet to provide local bus services where commercial bus services have been withdrawn.
4. The proposals do not affect as wide a geographical area as the previous round but there has been a substantial response to the consultation. Understandably most people who responded disagreed with the proposals and most people said that if they were implemented their access to a range of essential services would be worse. We were pleased to note therefore that in response to the consultation, a number of the proposals affecting specific bus services have been changed by:
 - developing a revised timetable to increase passenger take-up; or
 - developing a minimum service operated by the County Council's in-house fleet operation; or
 - retaining services due to there not being enough capacity in the local Community Transport sector to accommodate changes at present; or
 - retaining the existing bus service at a lower price.
5. A key point made by this Committee last year, in its report on access to services and transport options, was that all areas need to have viable passenger transport in order to be able to access essential services. Several of the recommendations put forward by the Committee in that report have been taken on board. We were

reassured therefore that communities will not be left without an alternative form of transport by these proposals. However we would like the Executive to continue to press government to reform the Concessionary Travel Scheme. Yet again some of the consultation responses showed that concessionary bus pass holders would be prepared to pay towards their fare. Also the point was well made at our meeting about the inequality in funding between rural and urban local authorities. In this regard, we encourage the Executive to invite our two local MPs who are Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State at the DfT, for further discussions around government support to rural areas particularly in relation to transport.

Ringway Performance 2014/15

6. We were provided with the results of the Evaluation Panel held earlier in the summer. 19 out of the 23 Primary Performance Indicators (PPI) were met in 2014/15 and 11 out of 19 Secondary Performance Indicators (SPI) were met in 2014/15. Based on this the outcome the Term of the Contract remains unchanged at nine years.
7. We were informed that some of the existing performance indicators have not driven the right outcomes and these have now been amended. Chiefly these relate to where performance targets have been set unrealistically high in the past. Revising some of the performance indicators should give Ringway a genuine chance of winning back a year of the contract.
8. New working arrangements for minor works are being implemented. This should see a better balance being achieved between the work ordered by the County Council and the resources deployed by Ringway to undertake the work.

Task group review of the Council's Residents Parking Scheme Policy

9. Further to my update to the County Council in July, the task group concluded its review in August and presented the draft report to the Committee at its meeting on 14 October 2015.
10. The task group concluded that there is a case for introducing limited flexibility into the policy with regards to implementing residents' parking schemes in some areas where at least half of the properties have access to off-street parking. These relate to:
 - streets close to major employment sites operating beyond the normal working day/week where there is competition for on-street parking space between residents and non-residents (typically those working on the employment site); or
 - where there are concentrations of residents with health and mobility difficulties living in the area needing medical and care visits; or
 - where parking problems would result from new development being planned in a residential area.
11. Existing and new safeguards can be put in place to ensure that residents' parking schemes do not spread in an unplanned way, and continue to be based upon the actual parking needs of an area rather than a desire for exclusivity by those living there.

12. The Committee agreed the report including the recommendations to be presented to the Executive.
13. The final report was presented to the Executive on 27 October 2015. The Executive noted the findings of the report and agreed for the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Don Mackenzie, in discussion with the Corporate Director (BES) to take forward the recommendations in the report.

Fracking

14. As reported in my previous update, our Committee has agreed to set aside its meeting in January to investigate the environmental impacts of fracking, including the safeguards that should be put in place. The meeting will be a joint meeting with the Scrutiny of Health Committee and will be held on Friday 22 January 2016. A range of external witnesses have agreed to attend including regulators, the UK Onshore Operators Group and Friends of the Earth.

County Councillor Andrew Backhouse Chairman

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Northallerton

30 October 2015