

**CABINET – 16 OCTOBER 2018****DRAFT PASSENGER TRANSPORT POLICY AND STRATEGY****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on the draft Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS) and to seek approval to adopt the PTPS as the basis for future management of passenger transport services, replacing the existing 'Revised Policy on the Supported Bus Network'.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that:
  - (a) The results of the consultation on the draft Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS) be noted;
  - (b) The response to the consultation, as set out in paragraphs 49 to 55, be agreed;
  - (c) The draft PTPS, attached as Appendices A and B to this report, be approved;
  - (d) The reallocation of £145,000 from the current passenger transport budget be approved to assist in the delivery of the PTPS, including the development of local solutions and building public understanding of and confidence in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT);
  - (e) The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport, be authorised to make such minor amendments to the PTPS as necessary to ensure that it remains current and conforms to legislation;
  - (f) A PTPS Operational Handbook (as set out in paragraphs 56 to 58) be developed to assist officers in the day-to-day operational delivery of the PTPS;
  - (g) That the Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Environment and Transport, be authorised to approve the implementation of the PTPS Operational Handbook, and to make such amendments to it as might be necessary from delivery experience, providing such amendments have no material effects on the PTPS.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

3. Adoption of the PTPS will ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties, as set out in paragraph 16, delivers value-for-money passenger transport services and supports the 2018/19 to 2021/22 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
4. The new PTPS will provide a robust and transparent framework for determining decisions on the provision of passenger transport services. This will also help to mitigate the risk to the Council from changing circumstances in the commercial market.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

5. The final draft PTPS and the outcome of the consultation will be considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2018 and their views will be presented to Cabinet.
6. Subject to approval of the final draft PTPS, it is intended that key policy and strategy changes will be implemented from June 2019, with a currently intended target date for full implementation of the PTPS by the end of 2019.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

7. The Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) identifies six overall priorities, three of which are relevant when considering passenger transport provision:
  - Supporting the local economy;
  - Encouraging active and sustainable travel;
  - Improving connectivity and accessibility.
8. In September 2013 the Cabinet considered a report of the Environment and Transport Scrutiny Review Panel on the County Council's 95% Bus Coverage Policy. It agreed a new supported bus policy, which aimed to provide a strategic fit with LTP3 objectives, met 'essential travel needs' and would ensure that the whole transport offer was underpinned by clear value-for-money criteria (see Appendix C).
9. In January 2018, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the 'Community Bus Partnership Review', which outlined current performance of the four community bus partnerships. The contracts for these services finish in June 2019.
10. At its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Cabinet approved a consultation on the draft PTPS.
11. In May 2018 the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft PTPS. Its comments, along with other comments received during the consultation, have helped shape the final draft PTPS.

**Resource Implications****Finance**

12. The draft PTPS places an emphasis on communities meeting their own passenger transport needs where they cannot be met by commercially operated bus services. Whilst it is not the intention that the Council should take the lead in proposing and helping to implement community-led solutions, nevertheless reflecting on the issues raised during PTPS consultations it is recognised that communities will require some support and assistance. Ascertaining the level of support needed by communities was one of the key aims of the consultation exercise. In order to support communities in developing local solutions, as explained in paragraph 54 of the report, it is proposed to reallocate £145,000 from the passenger transport budget.
13. If approved, the adoption of a new PTPS will support the delivery of the £400,000 ongoing savings in passenger transport support, required from the MTFS. The existing budget for services provided totals £2.314 million.
14. The cost of the consultation exercise was funded from within the existing Environment and Transport revenue budget.
15. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the content of this report.

**Legal Implications**

16. A new PTPS would support the Council's responsibilities as Local Transport Authority (LTA) in meeting the requirements of the Transport Act 1985, Section 63 (1) (a). LTAs must "secure the provision of such public transport services as the council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose". The Council's statutory duties are set out in Appendix D.
17. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on the content of this report.

**Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

18. This report has been circulated to all members of the Council.

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

19. The report taken to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018 outlined the need to develop a new PTPS to replace the revised Policy on the supported Bus Network. That report contained key information under the following headings (details of which can be found at Appendix E):
- Historic policy
  - Current local bus policy (Appendix C)
  - Existing service expenditure (a list of the current local bus services is provided in Appendix F)
  - Catalysts for change
    - Bus Services Act 2017
    - County Council MTFs (2018/19-2021/22) - £400,000 saving arising from implementation of a PTPS
    - The County Council's new Strategic Plan and Single Outcomes Framework (adopted in 2017)
    - The outcome of the 2017 Community Bus Partnership Review
  - Draft PTPS scope
  - Draft PTPS approach
  - Draft PTPS priorities
  - Financial support for passenger transport services.

The Cabinet was advised that a new PTPS was necessary to manage and maintain passenger transport services which enabled the Council to meet its statutory duties and the requirements of the MTFs. The Cabinet approved the draft policy for consultation.

### **Consultation**

#### **Overview**

20. A consultation with the public and key stakeholders on the draft PTPS was undertaken between 21 March and 13 June 2018. Its key purpose was to seek views on the draft PTPS and not on service specific issues. However, many service specific comments were received, as set out in this report.
21. Consultation proposals were available on the council's website and five consultation events were held. The consultation documents, which included an information document and a consultation survey, (attached at Appendix G 1, 2, 3, and 4) were available on the website. Hard copies were available on all supported bus routes and on request via a dedicated phone number and email address (ptps@leics.gov.uk). The survey was designed to be easy to complete using mobile phones and tablets. The consultation was advertised widely through media channels and stakeholder networks.

22. The consultation engaged with existing passenger transport service users, along with a wider audience, in order to help increase understanding of:
- Views on the role that the Council should play in providing mobility to those without use of or access to a private car (legislative requirements notwithstanding)
  - What was considered to offer good use of money, in light of the Council's wider service and budgetary pressures.
23. It was also important that people understood what the potential implications for currently supported passenger transport services could be, should the draft PTPS be implemented. The consultation also aimed to help the Council to understand community capabilities and future assistance they might require to deliver their own solutions, as necessary.
24. The consultation included:
- 1) Scene setting – why a new PTPS was needed
  - 2) Broad principles of the PTPS
  - 3) Explanation of the key assessment criteria
  - 4) Potential effect of the PTPS – showing how current supported bus services could be affected with the adoption of the PTPS.
25. Five consultation events were held across the County the details of which are in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Consultation Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>No.of attendees</b>
Thursday 3 May 2018	Measham Leisure Centre	7pm to 8.30pm	7
Thursday 10 May 2018	Lutterworth Town Hall	7pm to 8.30pm	9
Thursday 17 May 2018	Green Towers, Hinckley	7pm to 8.30pm	5
Monday 21 May 2018	Melton Civic Suite	7pm to 8.30pm	61
Wednesday 23 May 2018	Rosebery St Peter's Community Centre, Loughborough	7pm to 8.30pm	10

26. A briefing for Parish Councils on the draft PTPS was held on 26 March 2018, which set out the current passenger transport services in Leicestershire, why a new PTPS is required, the approach being undertaken, the PTPS proposals, consultation details, what the changes might mean in practice and the next steps post consultation. 29 Parish Councils were represented at the event. The consultation also received extensive media coverage.
27. Five demonstration Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services were organised to coincide with the consultation period. The objective of this demonstration initiative was to provide residents in a number of localities with the opportunity to experience using a DRT. The demonstration services are set out in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: DRT Demonstration Services**

Existing Local Bus Service	Start date/ days of operation for 3 weeks	Destination	Villages served	Time of first pick up	Time of destination arrival	Return journey time
7	9 May Wed, Fri	Measham	Newton Burgoland, Snarestone, Appleby Magna	09.45	10.00	12.00
66	22 May Wed, Fri	Hinckley	Dadlington, Stoke Golding	09.45	10.00	12.00
X55	23 May Wed, Fri	Hinckley	Sharnford, Stoney Stanton, Sapcote	09.45	10.10	12.00
25	24 May Tue, Thurs	Melton Mowbray	Scalford, Eastwell, Eaton	09.45	10.05	12.00
55/56	24 May Tue, Thurs	Melton Mowbray	Saxby, Garthorpe, Coston, Buckminster	09.45	10.05	12.00

### Consultation survey responses

28. A detailed report on the full consultation response (i.e. analysis consultation survey responses) is attached at Appendix H. There were 928 survey responses in total; not all respondents answered every question. The headline response to questions is set out in paragraphs 29 to 33, with further detailed assessment provided in the appended consultation report. The survey asked 35 questions, of which 11 were open ended. A summary of responses is provided below.
29. Overview:
- 88% of respondents were users of subsidised bus services
  - 92% of respondents were members of the public
  - 32 organisations responded (mix of public/voluntary and private)
  - 4,869 comments were received on open ended questions
30. Aims of draft PTPS:
- 81% (714) support the priority groupings identified (older population, disabled, isolated, employment deprived areas) – 888 total responses received
  - 80% (711) support the types of journey proposed for prioritisation (food shopping, primary healthcare, employment and training) – 896 total responses received
  - 74% (623) support the core operating times identified (Monday to Friday 07.00 to 19.00, Saturday 08.00 to 18.00) – 866 total responses received

- 62% (554) agreed with aim of the PTPS in focussing on essential needs in a cost effective way – 913 total responses received
- 59% (503) support community transport schemes – 860 total responses received
- 55% (465) supporting operators to provide services commercially without subsidy – 850 total responses received

31. Implementation of draft PTPS:

- 77% (610) said that implementation would make it harder for them to access to access essential services – 792 total responses received
- 51% (466) disagreed with Council's view that proposals would provide an efficient PTPS that meets user needs for priority journeys – 883 total responses received
- 40% (312) disagreed with proposed model for deciding financial case for subsidised bus services, 34% agreed (266) and 26% (203) neither agreed or disagreed – 781 total responses received
- Open comments – buses vital for sustaining lifestyle, reliance on them to carry out activities, reducing subsidies would result in reduced service use and further service decreases in future.

32. Views on Subsidised Bus Services (SBS):

- 74% (658) said they used bus services once a week or more – 889 total responses received
- 61% (529) disagreed with Council's view on buses not always being the best passenger transport solution – 867 total responses received
- 54% (467) disagreed with view that subsidising underutilised bus routes does not represent the best use of Council resources - 865 total responses received
- 60% (322) said they were satisfied with bus service provision provided in the county – 536 total responses received

33. Views of alternative passenger transport (DRT/Community Transport):

- 35% (311) dissatisfied with current alternative passenger transport services  
27% (241) satisfied with current alternative passenger transport services – 891 total responses received
- 83% (321) had never used such services (of those that had used the services 43% were satisfied) – 387 total responses received
- 52% (410) disagreed with view that such services could provide an alternative solution where SBS are low value for money – 789 total responses received
- 87% (472) said replacing SBS with DRT would make it harder for them to access essential services – 542 total responses received
- Open comments – need for more information on such services

Non-survey responses

34. In addition to the formal survey responses received, a total of 285 responses (including responses from 30 organisations) to the consultation were made via the consultation mail box [ptps@leics.gov.uk](mailto:ptps@leics.gov.uk) and by letter.
35. Whilst the consultation exercise was to seek people's views on the draft PTPS, the majority of the responses received outside of the formal consultation contained comments about the specific services that the Council currently subsidise with many respondents raising concerns about those services being withdrawn.
36. The consultation document provided an illustration of how existing subsidised bus services would score against the proposed criteria using cost and service performance data from January 2018. A table detailing the likelihood of continuation was provided and it is this table that is likely to have triggered the high volume of service specific comments.
37. As explained in the consultation document, there were no proposals to end any services detailed in the table at that time and any decision on the future of these services would be based on the final adopted policy and strategy and would reflect current cost and performance data when reviewed following PTPS adoption. Service performance is linked to passenger numbers therefore this changes after time. It also confirmed that existing service contracts are currently extended until June 2019.
38. In addition to the comments made about the services contracted by the County Council there were comments made about a number of the commercial bus services and these were predominantly about their performance and reliability.
39. Other comments received covered the following general themes: Demand Responsive Transport (DRT); village/community provision; development; isolation; accessibility; rural disadvantage; PTPS criteria/priorities; suggested improvements/ways to encourage use; implications of no bus provision; concessionary travel; alignment with strategic and local policies and partnership working.
40. There were some concerns raised about the way in which the consultation was carried out with some respondents saying it was poorly publicised with many people not being aware of it. The County Council's approach to this consultation is laid out in paragraphs 20 to 27 of this report and was conducted in accordance with the Council's guidance for developing new policies. Whilst it is appreciated that engaging people in a consultation on fairly technical documents such as the draft PTPS is challenging, it is considered that the Council made considerable effort to make this consultation as accessible as possible.
41. The informal comments received are detailed in Appendix I, which also contain a list of the organisations that responded. In summary the following was raised:
- i. Services Contracted by the County Council  
 Comments received about these services were notably similar in nature for each service. The key emphasis being a strong desire to see them continued as they are a 'lifeline' for communities; particularly the elderly and infirm, and they provide social opportunity and independence. Respondents felt that their service provides access to key services (shopping, health, employment and



education) and that those without a car rely on it. Many were of the view that if their service was withdrawn then this would lead to isolation and be detrimental to communities. The need to serve development growth was also highlighted and there were various suggestions on how individual services could be improved.

ii. Commercial Bus Services

A number of comments about some of the commercial services were made and these were in the main about their importance to people, current issues and how some of them could be improved. A priority of the PTPS is to support the commercial network in order to maximise use and ensure continued viability. Comments made about the commercial services during this consultation will be brought to the attention of the respective operators for their awareness and consideration.

iii. Demand Responsive Transport

It was clear from the consultation responses and also through the discussions at the consultation events that people are not convinced about the suitability of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) or understand how it works.

Respondents felt it was a tiresome process and unworkable for specific journeys such as medical appointments and work. Paragraph 33 sets out the formal consultation response to DRT, including that 83% (321) had never used such services. Of those that had used the services 43% (387) were satisfied.

It is recognised that if the Council is to propose DRT as an alternative then more work is required to promote the benefits of this form of transport and to increase the awareness and understanding of how it works.

The benefits of DRT are that it only operates on demand and that the Council will only pay costs when used. This should represent a more cost effective solution than operating and paying for a scheduled bus, which on some occasions may be carrying no, or few, passengers.

iv. Village/Community Provision

There were a number of requests received for the reinstatement of bus services that had been withdrawn in the past or requests for provision where no services currently exist. For example better provision was requested for some of the county's tourist attractions such as Bradgate Park, Twycross Zoo, Beacon Hill and the National Forest.

If adopted, the PTPS will help to inform what the most appropriate and fit for purpose passenger transport solution is for certain communities across the county. Such solutions may not be in the form of a bus and could be some form of local community solution.

v. Development

Many respondents highlighted the importance of securing Section 106 funding towards public transport provision for new developments to ensure sustainability of those developments.

The Council continually looks for opportunities through developments to secure funding towards passenger transport and ensure those developments have access to passenger transport services. The draft Strategy places a greater emphasis on “site promoters” to work with bus operators to develop solutions rather than accepting contributions. Contributions will only be accepted where it is as certain as possible that passenger transport provision will continue to be viable after the contribution has been used.

vi. Isolation

Isolation was raised as a concern by a number of respondents if bus services are withdrawn, particularly for the elderly community.

It is fully appreciated that people value their independence and ability to access services. Where under the PTPS it is established that a bus service is not viable, the Council will support local communities to consider and develop community solutions or DRT.

The Council will continue to support Community Transport services for people from vulnerable groups such as disabled or older people with impaired mobility and people who live in isolation. There are currently 13 Community Transport providers across the county providing this service.

vii. Accessibility

Poor accessibility on buses for disabled users and those with pushchairs was highlighted by some respondents.

Bus operators must comply with the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations to ensure that their vehicles are fully accessible.

viii. Rural Disadvantage

There was a feeling with some respondents that town residents mattered more than rural residents and that there was too much public transport for city residents and too little for rural residents.

The densely populated nature and housing mix of towns naturally encourages operators to provide a bus service due to the high usage demand. Such demand is often sufficient to ensure the commercial viability of those services. Inevitably in rural locations where population density and usage demand is less the commercial viability of operating buses diminishes. As such the commercial network tends to be dominant around towns as opposed to more rural outlying villages. This is the case for Leicestershire.

ix. PTPS Criteria/Priorities

There were a number of responses and suggestions received around the proposed criteria and priorities for the PTPS. These were mainly around affording higher priority to other areas such as leisure, tourism, social and financial services, the core times not catering for later working patterns and social/entertainment, and barriers to community transport solutions.

Whilst leisure, tourism, social and financial services provide a benefit for the local economy the priorities in the PTPS are geared and weighted towards necessity and need such as food shopping and health.

The core times specified in the PTPS cover the majority of working times and also when people are most likely to make journeys to access important services such as health and shopping. Demand is significantly lower outside of these times making it unviable to provide services for the journeys referred to. However, through the planning process the County Council continually look for developer opportunities to provide passenger transport that covers later working/shift patterns, particularly for new employment developments.

Restrictions under Section 19 of the Transport Act were highlighted as a potential barrier to community solutions. Organisations that provide transport on a “not for profit” basis can apply for permits under Section 19 to allow the holder to operate transport services for hire or reward without the need for a full public service vehicle operator’s licence. As part of the implementation of the PTPS the Council will provide advice and guidance support for communities to develop local community solutions where required and this will include operational advice/guidance around licencing.

x. Suggested improvements/ways to encourage use

Various suggestions on ways to improve services were made such as Real Time Information provision, smarter, more flexible and cross cutting ticketing, better timetabling, better promotion, better utilisation of vehicle fleets and a holistic approach to network planning.

The Council is already actively working with operators on a number of these areas in order to improve services and welcomes the suggestions and views put forward as part of this consultation exercise. These will be given due consideration.

xi. Implications of no buses/importance of buses

A number of respondents raised concerns about the implications of there being no buses and the importance of buses. These primarily centred on there being an increased burden on the Council to provide alternatives as well as a potential increased spend across other support service areas. The importance of buses for accessing essential services was also emphasised with many local branches of banks, shops and post offices closed down. Some concerns were also raised about the adverse impacts on people’s health and wellbeing including mental health if no bus provision is available.

Whilst an impact of the PTPS might be the curtailment of some subsidised bus services this does not mean that areas currently served by such buses would no longer have some form of passenger transport service in the future in order to access important services such as health and shopping. The PTPS focuses on how the Council would go about meeting its statutory duties and deliver value for money and fit for purpose passenger transport services. This does not however necessarily mean that these services will be in the form of a bus.

xii. Concessionary Travel

Some respondents suggested that concessionary bus pass holders could pay a fare to support non-commercial services and that concessionary fare arrangements prevent operators from making services more profitable. Under current legislation, it is a mandatory requirement that concessionary pass holders are allowed to travel for free after 9:30am.

It is a legal requirement for local authorities to reimburse bus operators for concessionary travel based on a principle that operators should be no better or no worse off than if a full fare was paid for that journey. It would be a matter of choice for a concessionary pass holder to pay a full fare and not show their pass to the driver. It is not possible for them to pay part of a fare with their pass.

xiii. Alignment with Strategic and Local Policies

Comments were received about the importance of aligning the PTPS with strategic and local policies.

The policy document for the PTPS sets out how the policy will support the council's strategic aims and how it will help to deliver the five priority outcomes: A Strong Economy; Wellbeing and Opportunity; Keeping People Safe; Great Communities; Affordable and Quality Homes. It also sets out how the PTPS aligns with the Council's Commissioning and Procurement Strategy as well as other developing strategies and how it will be considered for review as any local circumstances, national policy or guidance changes with respect to public transport.

xiv. Partnership Working

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Harborough District Council expressed a desire to work with the County Council on public transport provision and explore alternative passenger transport solutions. Some respondents also welcomed the opportunity to work with the council to develop local transport solutions.

Petition – Retain Market Harborough Services

42. A petition containing 2971 signatures was received during the consultation period and this requesting that all Market Harborough services be retained including services 33, 44 and 58. The petition will be presented to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 October 2018.
43. The consultation exercise was about the draft PTPS; it was not about specific services. Comments received and representations made as part of the Harborough petition, and also any further petitions about services that may be received, will be noted at this time. Should a particular route which has been subject to such comments/representation require review as a result of the new policy and strategy, if adopted, then those comments/representations will be taken into consideration at the time of the review.

Public event feedback

44. A total of 92 people attended the public events and an analysis report can be found at Appendix J. The key themes raised were:

Theme	Public View
Rationale for change	Some sympathy for the premise that continuing to fund empty buses / rarely used services is not desirable at a time when public finances are under pressure, many participants nevertheless expressed views that they regard bus services as a 'public good' and expect to have access to a regular bus service.
	Better promotion and encouragement of public transport also has the effect of increasing usage and thereby commercial viability. This has worked in Loughborough but achievements will now be eroded through this PTPS.
Focus on value for money in meeting high priority transport needs	View that LCC definition of need does not match with need as felt by many people (note: 80% of respondents to the formal consultation support types of journeys proposed for prioritisation)
Work with commercial operators	LCC should be holding bus operators to account to address gaps in service and wasteful behaviour
Priority groups, priority journeys and core operating times.	Young people should be considered as well.
	Connecting people to rail transport should also be important.
Replace bus services with DRT / local transport solutions	Some acceptance in principle that 'non-bus' services can provide a better / more flexible solution.
	Bus services could be provided in a different way that would reduce cost and/or reduce travel time.
DRT services	There were perceptions that the service will be costly for users (as delivered by taxi companies), inflexible and requiring 24hr notice.
	DRT services should be better promoted.
Community Transport	Services have potential to play bigger role, but should be better promoted, as there are many misunderstandings about who the services are for.
Local Transport Solutions	Examples are needed to make this come to life and to get communities / people to think about such solutions ahead of the time where they will be fighting to keep their bus route.
Potential impact of service change on current/future users	General feelings that people would be 'stuck' without bus service. Main concern is for elderly service users who are dependent on help with transport.
	Consider geography and demography of service users carefully when applying '800 metres' scores/rules – 800 metres (especially when uphill) presents a significant barrier to older and disabled people.

Other elements of the PTPS (Securing services for new housing development, fares and ticketing, concessionary travel, passenger information, service disruptions)	Need to take account of future housing developments when reviewing bus services. Also views LCC should continue securing money from developers for bus services to new housing development.
	Should be possibilities for people using concessionary passes to contribute financially on a voluntary basis. There appears to be willingness for a pilot scheme.

### Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

45. On 31 May 2018 the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft PTPS, as part of the engagement and consultation exercise. It was resolved that the views of the Committee would be included in the final report presented to Cabinet. A copy of the committee's comments can be viewed at Appendix K.

### Demand Responsive Trial

46. As part of the consultation, five demonstration Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services were set up to mirror existing subsidised bus services. These provided residents in a number of villages with an opportunity to experience using a DRT service where none previously operated. Each service ran for three weeks, providing two return journeys a week to the nearest local centre. The services were promoted via a range of channels including; the consultation webpage, the public consultation events with information also posted at bus stops in the respective villages and leaflets provided to the parish councils.
47. Usage across the services was mixed. The services mirroring the Hinckleybus 66 and Centrebus 55/56 failed to attract any bookings. The service replicating part of the Roberts 7 saw only one return passenger journey made. However, for the two remaining services; one saw seven return passenger journeys with a single one-way journey (Hinckley bus X55) and the other saw seven return passenger journeys with two one-way journeys (Centrebus 25). A full breakdown of the demonstration DRT trial results can be found at Appendix L.
48. Passengers were asked to complete a survey on their experience using the service. Three people completed this and were positive overall in their feedback. They did disagree however, regarding the length of time available to them at the local centre before the return journey. The three views were too short, about right and too long.

### Overall summary of main consultation responses

49. In summary, the overall key consultation outcomes arising from the draft PTPS consultations can be summarised as:

#### Areas of support

- a) Strong agreement with aims of the PTPS in focussing on essential needs in a cost effective way

- b) General support that the County Council should support commercial operators
- c) Strong support for the priority groupings identified (older population, disabled, isolated, employment deprived areas)
- d) Strong support for the core operating times identified (Monday to Friday 07.00 to 19.00, Saturday 08.00 to 18.00)
- e) Strong support for the types of journey that will be prioritised (food shopping, primary healthcare, employment and training)

#### Areas of concern

- f) General disagreement with County Council's view that buses are not always the best solution in providing transport services
- g) Disagreement that subsidising under- utilised buses does not represent best use of council resources
- h) Disagreement that DRT and local solutions could provide an alternative to subsidised bus services
- i) Apparent lack of awareness of what local transport solutions (DRT) are and what support they can provide
- j) People's ability to access essential services made much harder by the PTPS.

#### Response to consultation

50. It is clear from the survey responses, the number of service specific comments and the petition received, that people are wedded to the provision of traditional bus services. To some extent, this is understandable, as bus services run to regular patterns and on regular routes that are comfortable and familiar to people. Respondents want a regular bus service regardless of cost or whether they represent value for money.
51. However, budget pressures on local authorities across the country mean that, invariably, it is no longer tenable or sustainable to simply continue to support traditional bus services as the default solution to addressing the lack of commercial market provision. The recent Campaign for Better Transport report "Buses in Crisis" (2018) highlights the challenges many local authorities are facing, in particular:
- Net reduction in funding of £20.2 million has been made to supported bus services in England in 2017-18
  - There has been a 46% net reduction from supported bus services in England since 2010-11
  - 56 out of 88 local authorities in England that responded to the survey reduced or spent nothing on supported bus services in 2017-18.
52. The Council faces its own budgetary pressures, and thus it cannot continue with the existing approach to supporting traditional bus services. It continues to recognise, however, that it is important for the Council to consider the provision of services in line with its statutory duty and that best meets people's needs within a climate of reducing funding. This is what the draft PTPS seeks to achieve.

53. It is therefore recommended that no fundamental changes be made to the draft PTPS in the light of the consultation outcomes. The draft PTPS attached at Appendix A and B contain some minor changes to the documents presented to Cabinet in March. Principally these are about tidying up wording and seeking to provide greater clarity in the strategy document as to the approach to providing access to key employment opportunities outside service centres (e.g. Magna Park).
54. Subject to the PTPS being approved, there will be a need to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to properly and effectively implement it. Examples of which are:
- a) Review of all subsidised services
  - b) Conducting reviews of existing services as and when we receive notifications of bus service withdrawal and periodic reviews of County Council supported bus services
  - c) Ensure the necessary data on which to conduct reviews is available and managed
  - d) Work with communities and stakeholders to explore alternative provision and manage any County Council support
  - e) Commission and manage the provision of alternative services
  - f) Work with bus companies to seek to ensure the long term stability and growth of the commercial bus network
  - g) To work with others (e.g. large scale employment sites) in respect of point (e) above.
  - h) Develop a better public understanding of, and greater confidence in, DRT services.
55. It is currently forecast that the resources above can be funded, whilst still achieving the £400,000 savings in passenger transport support identified in the MTFS.

### **Delivering the PTPS in practice: Operational Handbook**

56. This PTPS, if approved, will provide a robust and transparent framework for determining decisions on the provision of passenger transport services. It will not, however, set out the operational procedures and processes by which officers will implement on a day-to-day basis.
57. It is proposed that such process and procedures are set out in an Operational Handbook that will act as a guide to officers to ensure the effective delivery of the various aspects of the PTPS. This includes how services will be reviewed, how data will be collected, the level of community engagement and the decision making process. The handbook will ensure a clear, consistent and effective approach to the delivery of the PTPS for officers.
58. It will be implemented if the PTPS is approved. The document will be “fluid” and can be adapted to reflect any passenger transport legislation or policy change.



## **Timeline and Next Steps**

59. Subject to the PTPS being approved by Cabinet, the following programme of work will be developed to implement:
- Collate current service data – October/November 2018;
  - Review services and assess the case for support against the criteria set out in the PTPS and score – November/December 2018;
  - Produce programme for implementation – December 2018;
  - Commence engagement programme/consultation with local communities (this will include the design of alternatives, the Council's suggested offer, identification of local community solutions – January to June 2019 (and remainder of 2019));
  - Respond to community reaction – Throughout 2019;
  - React to changes in the commercial market and manage impacts – October 2018 onwards;
  - Full implementation of PTPS currently targeted to be by the end of 2019;
  - Subsidised Bus Services to be reviewed on an annual basis; and
  - An annual report is taken to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the performance of passenger services financially supported by the Council under the PTPS.

## **Conclusions**

60. Concerns raised during the PTPS consultations about the loss of bus services are recognised. However, in the light of continuing budgetary pressures and experiences with the operation of the current approach to supporting bus services, a new approach is required to providing passenger transport solutions in areas where commercial operations are not viable. If the Council continues to manage passenger transport provision under the existing local bus policy then the ability to define value for money and cost effectiveness will be lost. This is likely to result in increased costs for the service area and a position that is likely to become unsustainable in the relatively short term, particularly as commercial bus service withdrawals occur.
61. Accordingly, it is recommended that no fundamental changes be made to the draft PTPS as a result of the consultations, although the versions attached to this report include minor changes to the strategy wording in comparison to the version presented to the Cabinet in March 2018.
62. To effectively implement the PTPS in practice, an Operational Handbook will be developed. It will set out process and procedures that will act as a procedural guide to officers to ensure the effective delivery of the various aspects of the PTPS.
63. Recognising concerns raised by respondents about community transport provision and DRT, resources will be directed to work with communities to provide assistance and support to them in developing local solutions. Resources will also be directed to develop better public understanding of and greater confidence in DRT services.
64. It is intended currently that the PTPS will be reviewed in five years' time. However, it is likely that minor amendments will be required in the intervening period, for example, to respond to changes in legislation. An annual report will be taken to the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

65. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups.
66. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been completed, using the results from the public consultation (see Appendix M). This will assist the Cabinet with its decision on the exercise of its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.
67. Under this policy, it is likely that some existing subsidised bus services will no longer be supported and will therefore cease to operate. As a result, individuals who use these services may be negatively impacted as they will no longer receive the services they currently use. There is the potential for this to disproportionately impact older people, people with disabilities, and people who live in isolated or employment-deprived areas.
68. However, priority is given to services which support older people, people with disabilities, and people who live in isolated or employment-deprived areas. These services will score more highly against the proposed assessment criteria, and are therefore likely to have a stronger case for support.
69. It is not being proposed that where services are removed, individuals and communities should have no available transport provision. Where services are at risk of closure, consultation and engagement will be carried out with affected communities to develop an understanding of the essential needs in the area in terms of accessing essential services. Where this consultation identifies essential need, alternative provision will be designed in further consultation with communities – including older people, people with disabilities, and people who live in isolated or employment-deprived areas. This will result in value for money services, designed with the needs of communities and service users in mind to ensure flexibility and convenience.
70. The EHRIA has been scrutinised and informed by both the Council's Departmental Equalities Groups as well as the Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG). The LECG will continue to be involved through the implementation of the revised PTPS to ensure equalities considerations remain at the heart of putting the PTPS into practice.
71. A statement from the LECG is attached as Appendix N. The Group recognises the challenging situation facing the Council and acknowledges that equalities considerations are embedded in the draft PTPS approach. It is acknowledged that the Council has an understanding about who uses subsidised bus services and the impact of the PTPS on these service users. The LECG will remain involved in the PTPS implementation phase to ensure due regard is given to equalities issues.

### **Environmental Impact**

72. An environmental impact screening exercise has been completed to assess potential impacts and mitigations for the draft PTPS. A copy of the Environmental Impact Tool can be found at Appendix O. Subject to approval the development of the Operational Handbook will provide a further opportunity to consider the impact of the policy and

strategy on climate change, carbon emissions, congestion and the street-scene.

### **Background Papers**

- **Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 31 May 2018** 'Draft Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy'  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1044&MId=5328&Ver=4>
- **Cabinet – 9 March 2018** 'Draft Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy and Review of the Community Bus Partnerships'  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5178&Ver=4>

### **Appendices**

Appendix A	Draft Passenger Transport Policy
Appendix B	Draft Passenger Transport Strategy
Appendix C	Revised Policy on the Supported Bus Network
Appendix D	The Council's legal duty regarding subsidised bus services
Appendix E	Draft PTPS Background Information
Appendix F	List of current contracted local bus services
Appendix G	Consultation materials
Appendix H	Formal Consultation Results
Appendix I	Informal Consultation Results
Appendix J	Information Events Analysis
Appendix K	Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee (May 2018)
Appendix L	Demand Responsive Trial Results
Appendix M	Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment
Appendix N	Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group Comments
Appendix O	Environmental Impact Tool

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