

Agenda Item No. 4(d)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

10 May 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

FUTURE OF DERBYSHIRE TRAIN TIMES BOOKLET

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval from the Cabinet Member to change the production of the Derbyshire Train Times from a printed booklet to internet only version.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

Derbyshire County Council has produced the Derbyshire Train Times booklet for many years. This train timetable provides the only comprehensive details of train services serving all stations in Derbyshire, irrespective of the train operator. Two editions have been produced each year, at the time of national rail timetable changes in May and December. The timetable has been a free A5 booklet distributed through railway stations, Derbyshire libraries, Tourist Information Centres and a number of local outlets with a 20,000 circulation for the summer edition to meet demand from visitors and 18,000 copies for the December edition. The costs of producing this publication have been reduced significantly over a number of years due to more cost effective design and reduction in the quantity printed. The costs for two editions in 2016-17 are expected to be £5,500.

For many years, the Derbyshire Train Times booklet has been funded through contributions from the train operators. Derby City Council has also provided funding towards this publication as part of its financial contribution to Public Transport Timetable Information in Derbyshire. Unfortunately, over recent years, the contributions from the train operators have diminished. In light of this, a review of the train timetable booklet was carried out by Derbyshire County Council in 2014-15. The review considered a number of options, including charging and sponsorship, and was reported to Cabinet Member on 24 March 2015 (Minute No. 41/15 refers). It was agreed to continue to fund a printed booklet as some funding was still available at that time from the train companies and Derby City Council.

Current Position

For 2016-17, the three train companies (Arriva Rail Northern, CrossCountry Trains and East Midlands Trains) were each asked for a £2,000 contribution to cover the print costs for two editions (May and December 2016).

- The new Northern Rail operator, Arriva Rail Northern, has agreed to provide funding of £2,000; £1,000 for each edition in May and December 2016.
- CrossCountry Trains has agreed to provide funding of £1,000 for the May edition only. It is unable to make a commitment for the December edition as its current franchise ceases in October 2016. Although the contract is likely to be extended, it would be difficult to get any support from it in time to produce a December timetable booklet.
- East Midlands Trains has agreed to provide £200 towards the cost of the May edition but had declined to provide funding for December 2016 onwards as it believes this represents poor use of its funds.
- Derby City Council is unable to provide funding in 2016-17, due to reduced budgets.
- Additionally, Derbyshire's two Community Rail Partnerships have agreed to again fund some promotional community rail pages. However, this funding is to cover the extra cost of these pages and does not assist with the cost of the main part of the timetable book. This funding totals £500 per edition.

Therefore, there is £2,700 available to produce the May timetable booklet but currently only £1,500 for the December edition, which will cost a similar amount.

For 2016-17, there are three options available. These options are:

1. Produce a printed version of Derbyshire Train Times booklet for May 2016 at a cost of £2,700. The train operators' contributions will cover this cost.
2. Cease all production of the Derbyshire Train Times booklet. There will be some expectation from users to obtain the timetable publication as officers would be unable to inform the public sufficiently in advance of the ending of the publication in May 2016. Although not a statutory function of the Authority and the information can be obtained in other ways: either from train company timetables (printed and online), telephone or internet, a decision to completely cease production of the booklet without reasonable notice may cause concern to some members of the public,.
3. Produce the booklet as an online option for December 2016. Producing the timetables online would mean that the same information is still

available and accessible across the County. The timetable would be available on the Derbyshire County Council website. This would enable access for people over the internet at home and on smartphones. For those without access to the internet, the publication could be viewed for free at any Derbyshire County Council library, which would also enable the option to print pages at a cost of 10p per page. This option has been discussed and has the support of the Libraries Delivery Manager. It is anticipated that webpage monitoring could also provide an indication of usage/demand for continuing this option for the future.

Whilst the train timetable publication is valued by those people who use it, including visitors and tourists, it is not essential and few, if any, other authorities produce such a publication. The proposal is that the rail timetable would be produced online for the December 2016 edition and that usage be monitored to determine if this option is continued.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The publication can be compiled, as previously, by existing staff in Derbyshire's Rail Team. Train Company funding will cover print costs for the May 2016 edition, but not December 2016 onwards. In future, producing the Derbyshire Train Times as an online publication will negate the need for any funding from Derbyshire County Council's Public Transport publicity budget.

(4) **Environmental, Health and Transport Considerations** As detailed in the report.

(5) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** Continuing to provide the current facility for one more edition allows for notification to users of the proposed online option in sufficient time for December 2016 introduction. From December, users will be able to access the timetable online. Users without Internet access at home can go to their local Derbyshire County Council library and use the services.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, human resources and property considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details - Alastair Morley, extension 38062.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves:

- 9.1 The production of a printed Derbyshire Train Times booklet publication for May 2016.
- 9.2 The production of the Derbyshire Train Times booklet publication in an online format from December 2016 onwards.
- 9.3 The monitoring of use of the online edition with a further review to be reported to the Cabinet Member.

Mike Ashworth
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