

Agenda Item No. 7(q)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING

24 March 2015

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ON LOCAL BUS AND
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To outline the results of the recent public engagement on the use of Local Bus and Community Transport and to consider the next steps.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Background

Most bus services in Derbyshire are provided by commercial bus operators without any financial subsidy but the Authority has an important role in supplementing this commercial network by supporting socially necessary services that are not commercially viable. Of the 31.3m bus journeys in Derbyshire each year, about 3.7m (11.8%) are made on Derbyshire County Council contracted services.

Community Transport plays an important role in meeting Derbyshire's transport needs, particularly in helping older and disabled people get to essential services. Services include Dial-a-Bus, Group Travel and aCTive Travel (access to healthcare). The services are currently provided by the Community Transport schemes which receive funding from the County Council.

At its meeting on 15 July 2014, Cabinet considered a report on the five year Financial Plan. In the face of cuts in County Council spending, totalling some £157m, the report outlined a series of potential service cuts that may be needed to balance the budget. These included possible substantial cuts in funding for the supported bus network and Community Transport.

Public Engagement

In order to get a better understanding of how people currently use the affected services, a public engagement exercise was undertaken from 20 October to 14 December 2014.

Both on-line and paper-based copies of the questionnaire were widely available and advertised via the Council's website, social media, press releases, posters in libraries, district/borough council offices and on affected bus services, 50+ forums, Community Transport schemes, the Youth Derbyshire e-newsletter and Members' e-newsletter. The County Council's bus surveyors also engaged with passengers at various locations throughout the County raising awareness of the consultation amongst bus users.

In addition, various other stakeholders, including the Campaign for Better Transport and doctors' surgeries were contacted, and the Derbyshire Association for Local Councils was asked to alert Parish/Town Councils.

There was a very good response, having received over 3,000 responses by the end of the consultation period, including:

- 1,025 on-line questionnaires
- 2,125 printed questionnaires
- 8 letters
- 10 emails

The respondents to the survey appear to be reasonably representative of people who use public and community transport. For example, more women than men responded to the questionnaire and the sample included a high proportion of older people. A summary of the responses is set out in Appendix A.

- Responses were received from passengers using 137 of the 141 services listed as being affected.
- Two-thirds of responses came from females.
- 65% of responses were from people aged 65 years and over.
- 70% of responses were from people who do not consider themselves to have a disability.
- **Daytime services** - 73% of responses use daytime local bus services at least once a week or more often. The key reasons for travel are to access town or local centre facilities, and to undertake supermarket or food shopping.
- **Evening services** – 51% of respondents reported that they had used an evening bus service within the last six months. The main reason given for travel at this time was for leisure and social activities. The main concerns about the possible withdrawal of service were the inability to return from work/shopping trips and not being able to socialise at night. A significant number of respondents commented that they do not have an evening service.
- **Sunday services** – 42% of responses indicated they had used Sunday services within the last six months. Travel on Sundays is mainly related to leisure and social activities.

- **Dial-a-Bus** – Of the 404 respondents using Dial-a-Bus services, 63% reported that they used them at least once a week. The overwhelming reason for using the service was to access supermarkets and food shopping.
- **aCTive Travel** – This service was only used by 216 of the people responding to the questionnaire, but of those using the service, 63% used it at least once a week. Users indicated that they mostly use the service to access healthcare (eg doctors' surgeries and hospital appointments) and other health related activities.
- **Priorities** - When asked what the priority should be for the Authority, when determining which transport services to fund, 49% of respondents felt it was to maintain transport to villages that lack other facilities, with 23% wanting to maintain the existing network of routes.
- **Flat fare scheme on Dial-a-Bus services** - 64% of respondents indicated that they would be prepared to pay more than the existing £1 each way.

County Council Response to Public Engagement

The response to the engagement has clearly demonstrated the importance of public transport to peoples' daily lives. In addition, there have been some important developments, notably the proposals for devolution and a Combined Authority, that offer the prospect of future opportunities to adopt a more sustainable approach to public transport provision. Other recent developments include the current review of specialist transport services, the current public consultation on changes to the b_line scheme and potential changes in Government policy.

In light of this, Members agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 27 January 2015 to allocate £3.5m from the General Reserve to support the continued provision of local bus services in 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The engagement process has been valuable in getting a better understanding of how the supported bus network meets the transport needs of Derbyshire residents. It has also helped to stimulate discussion with bus operators about the scope for some supported services to be provided on a commercial basis; the opportunities to develop closer links and partnerships with bus operators; and the potential for innovative solutions to meeting transport needs.

It is helpful to maintain this momentum and the decision to use funding from reserves to provide continued support for local bus services in 2015-16 and 2016-17 provides an excellent opportunity for the Council to review its overall strategy for public transport to ensure this reflects current priorities and continues to provide the best possible value for money. It is recommended, therefore, that a wide-ranging review of public transport should be undertaken, building on the results of public engagement, the scope and timescales of which will be subject to Cabinet Member approval. A further report outlining a

proposed way forward and proposals for public consultation would be submitted for Cabinet's consideration. The outcome of the consultation and the proposed way forward would be subject to a further Cabinet decision.

The public engagement also confirmed the important role of Dial-a-Bus and aCTive Travel in meeting the accessibility needs of some of Derbyshire's most vulnerable residents. These needs are unlikely to diminish but the current Financial Plan, as well as new guidelines issued by the Department for Transport on Community Transport funding, indicates that the Authority will need to reduce funding from its current level. Against this background, officers are developing proposals for the provision of Community Transport services from April 2016. All options will be considered. Any proposals would be subject to a further report later in 2015 and public consultation prior to any changes being introduced.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The costs incurred in providing local bus and community transport services will be met from General Reserves, the Public Health Resource Fund and budgets available to the Economy, Transport and Environment.

(4) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** The public engagement has demonstrated how public and Community Transport helps people who may otherwise have difficulty accessing essential services. More modern buses are easier to use by people with mobility difficulties, whilst Community Transport offers a door-to-door service for people who would have difficulty using conventional public transport.

(5) **Environment, Health and Transport Considerations** Public and Community Transport provides an alternative means of accessing essential services for people who do not have the use of a car. These services help people to develop more active and less car dependent lifestyles. The services also help to provide access to healthcare facilities, including Doctors surgeries, hospital appointments, exercise classes and other health-related activities.

Other Considerations

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** Yes.

(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 Environment Department. Officer contact details – Rebecca Pennyfather, extension 36721.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 9.1 Notes the findings of the public engagement process undertaken into the use of supported Local Bus and Community Transport services.
- 9.2 Notes the decision to use funding from reserves to maintain support for Local bus services in 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- 9.3 Authorises the Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure to agree the scope and timescale for a wide-ranging review of public transport, including public consultation.
- 9.4 Agrees to receive further reports on proposals for the future provision of public transport and Community Transport services which would be subject to public consultation prior to any final decision being made.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

This Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand how you use the services. We are also interested to know how you would be affected if any of these services were to be reduced or withdrawn. We will use the information you give us to develop proposals for future transport provision, which we expect to consult on early in 2015. Full details will be available on our website.

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is 14 December 2014.

Your Views

* In order for you to be able to answer these questions accurately, please refer to the Appendix containing a list of all the subsidised bus services and at which parts of the route/times of day they are subsidized within Derbyshire.

Q1 If you use a service/s listed in the Appendix on a part of the route/time of day which is subsidized by the County Council, please list which service/s you use (only enter the number e.g. 1, 6.1, 21E):

Apart from 4 services on the list, all other services were represented

Q2 How often do you or a member of your household use the daytime local bus services on a part of the route/time of day which is subsidized by the County Council?

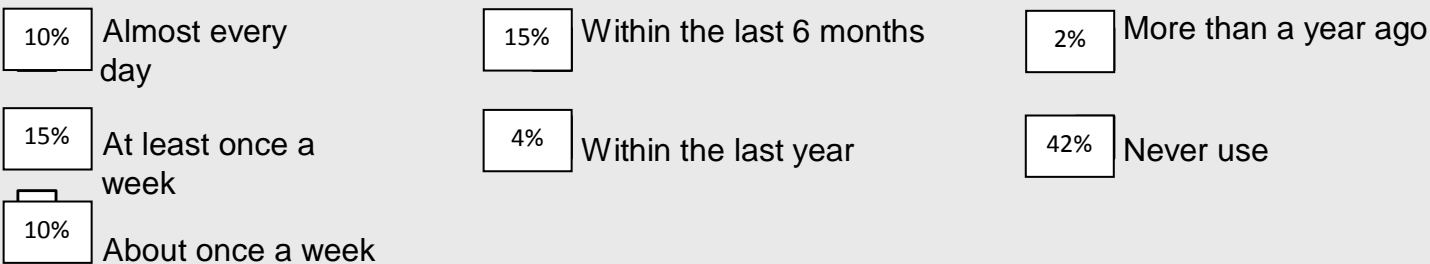
43%	Almost every day	8%	Within the last 6 months	1%	More than a year ago
30%	At least once a week	1%	Within the last year	6%	Never use
11%	About once a week				

What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

2,550 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 33% related to little or no affect, reduced choice, more car use, affect on lifestyle
- b) Access to Essential Services responses – 28% related to the affect on independence, access to everyday services
- c) Service Related responses – 2% related to using less public transport, retain services, travel would be affected, increased journey times
- d) Access to Education responses – 3% related to issues around access to schools and colleges
- e) Gold Card Related responses – 0.2% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession
- f) Access to Health Services responses – 12% related to access to health services i.e doctors, hospitals, dentists
- g) Access to Employment Responses – 12% related to access to employment i.e. only transport, journey times, convenience, loss of job
- h) Access to Leisure Responses – 12% related to access to leisure i.e. health, fitness, family contact, rural access, social life
-) Access to Shops Responses – 18% related to access to shops i.e. supermarkets, general shops

Q3 How often do you or a member of your household use the evening local bus services on a part of the route/time of day which is subsidized by the County Council?



What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

1,764 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 57% related to little or no affect, reduced choice, more car use, affect on lifestyle
- b) Access to Essential Services responses – 12% related to the affect on independence, access to everyday services
- c) Service Related responses – 0.7% related to using less public transport, retain services, travel would be affected, increased journey times
- d) Access to Education responses – 1% related to issues around access to schools and colleges
- e) Gold Card Related responses – 0% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession
- f) Access to Health Services responses – 2% related to access to health services i.e doctors, hospitals, dentists
- g) Access to Employment Responses – 7% related to access to employment i.e. only transport, journey times, convenience, loss of job
- h) Access to Leisure Responses – 14% related to access to leisure i.e. health, fitness, family contact, rural access, social life
- i) Access to Shops Responses – 2% related to access to shops i.e. supermarkets, general shops

Q4 How often do you or a member of your household use the Sunday local bus services on a part of the route/time of day which is subsidized by the County Council?

10%	At least once a week	20%	Within the last 6 months	4%	More than a year ago
11%	About once a week	5%	Within the last year	49%	Never use

What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

1,580 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 67% related to little or no affect, reduced choice, more car use, affect on lifestyle
- b) Access to Essential Services responses – 6% related to the affect on independence, access to everyday services
- c) Service Related responses – 0.4% related to using less public transport, retain services, travel would be affected, increased journey times
- d) Access to Education responses – 0% related to issues around access to schools and colleges
- e) Gold Card Related responses – 0% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession
- f) Access to Health Services responses – 0.5% related to access to health services i.e doctors, hospitals, dentists
- g) Access to Employment Responses – 3% related to access to employment i.e. only transport, journey times, convenience, loss of job
- h) Access to Leisure Responses – 17% related to access to leisure i.e. health, fitness, family contact, rural access, social life
- i) Access to Shops Responses – 2% related to access to shops i.e. supermarkets, general shops

Q5 How often do you or a member of your household use the Community Transport Shopping Buses (Dial-a-Bus) services which are subsidized by the County Council?

1%	Almost every day	3%	Within the last 6 months	1%	More than a year ago
13%	At least once a week	1%	Within the last year	78%	Never use
4%	About once a week				

What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

894 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 52% related to little or no affect, reduced choice, more car use, affect on lifestyle
- b) Access to Essential Services responses – 18% related to the affect on independence, access to everyday services
- c) Service Related responses – 0.1% related to using less public transport, retain services, travel would be affected, increased journey times
- d) Access to Education responses – 0.1% related to issues around access to schools and colleges
- e) Gold Card Related responses – 0.1% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession
- f) Access to Health Services responses – 3% related to access to health services i.e doctors, hospitals, dentists
- g) Access to Employment Responses – 0.1% related to access to employment i.e. only transport, journey times, convenience, loss of job
- h) Access to Leisure Responses – 3% related to access to leisure i.e. health, fitness, family contact, rural access, social life
- i) Access to Shops Responses – 27% related to access to shops i.e. supermarkets, general shops

Q6 How often do you or a member of your household use the Community Transport (aCTive travel) services which are subsidized by the County Council?

1%	Almost every day	4%	Within the last 6 months	1%	More than a year ago
7%	At least once a week	1%	Within the last year	85%	Never use
2%	About once a week				

What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

575 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 63% related to little or no affect, reduced choice, more car use, affect on lifestyle
- b) Access to Essential Services responses – 13% related to the affect on independence, access to everyday services
- c) Service Related responses – 0.2% related to using less public transport, retain services, travel would be affected, increased journey times
- d) Access to Education responses – 0% related to issues around access to schools and colleges
- e) Gold Card Related responses – 0% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession
- f) Access to Health Services responses – 9% related to access to health services i.e doctors, hospitals, dentists
- g) Access to Employment Responses – 0.1% related to access to employment i.e. only transport, journey times, convenience, loss of job
- h) Access to Leisure Responses – 3% related to access to leisure i.e. health, fitness, family contact, rural access, social life
- i) Access to Shops Responses – 5% related to access to shops i.e. supermarkets, general shops

Q7 How often do you use the Wheels to Work services which are subsidized by the County Council?

0.4%	Almost every day	0.3%	Within the last 6 months	0.1%	More than a year ago
0.3%	At least once a week	0.1%	Within the last year	99%	Never use
0.2%	About once a week				

What would the impact be on you or any member of your household if this service was removed?

341 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 100% related to not being aware of the scheme or having no need for it

Q8 Please tell us why you are making these journeys: (Please select all that apply)

	Education facility	Employment or training	Healthcare facility	Leisure/Social Activity	Supermarket /food shopping	Town/Local Centre
Daytime local bus service	9%	20%	47%	57%	72%	74%
Evening local bus service	8%	22%	13%	73%	21%	39%
Sunday local bus service	1%	8%	6%	79%	33%	43%
Community Transport - Shopping Bus (Dial-a-Bus)	2%	0%	17%	22%	89%	42%
Community Transport (aCTive travel)	5%	2%	46%	39%	29%	21%
Wheels to Work	14%	41%	5%	18%	9%	23%
Other (Please specify)	245 responses including connecting with other services, volunteering, visiting friends and attending appointments					

Q9 What do you think should be the most important priority in determining which transport services the County Council funds? (Please select one option only)

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 6% | Total number of passengers carried on a route (highest number of passengers to be given greatest priority) |
| 2% | The amount it costs the Council for each passenger carried (lowest cost given greatest priority) |
| 23% | Maintaining the existing network of bus routes, with the frequency of each bus service determined by the total funds available, regardless of use |
| 49% | Maintaining the availability of transport in villages where there are no local services such as shops, post office etc |
| 5% | Distance from the nearest regular commercial bus route (highest distance given greater priority) |
| 14% | Other (Please specify) |

414 other responses. Of these, 225 responses reflect the identification of more than one of the priorities, 128 suggested other priorities, 55 were not relevant to the question.

Q10 Currently users of the Community Transport Shopping Buses (Dial-a-Bus) pay £1 each way if they have a Gold Card (Concessionary Travel Card for older people). If you use Community Transport Shopping Bus service, please tell us how much you would be prepared to pay as a Gold Card holder:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 35% | I would be prepared to pay £2 each way (£4 for a return journey) |
| 12% | I would not be prepared to pay any more than the existing fare (£2 for a return journey) |
| 29% | I would be prepared to pay £1.50 each way (£3 for a return journey) |
| 24% | I would like the service to be free with my Gold Card |

Q11 Are you answering this questionnaire as... (Please select all that apply)

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| <div>80%</div> | I am a user of local bus services which are paid for by Derbyshire County Council |
| <div>33%</div> | I am a user of local bus services which are not paid for by Derbyshire County Council |
| <div>19%</div> | I am a user of Community Transport services |
| <div>1%</div> | I work for a local bus/community transport company |
| <div>.2%</div> | I am a user of Wheels to Work |
| <div>1%</div> | I am not a Local Bus or a Community Transport user |
| <div>0%</div> | I work for a local bus company |
| <div>3%</div> | I work for Derbyshire County Council (not at a school) |
| <div>74%</div> | I am a Derbyshire resident |
| <div>5%</div> | Other (please specify) <div></div> |

Q12 If you have any other comments regarding the Public Transport or Community Transport that you use, please provide them below:

1,455 open ended textual responses were received. These responses were interpreted and summarized into the categories below in order to provide a quantitative analysis (nb. Total responses will not equate to 100% as respondents may have made comments against multiple areas or made no response at all)

- a) Generic responses – 18% related to non-specific responses
- b) Local Bus Services Positive responses – 25% related to importance, value of, positive effects
- c) Local Bus Service Negative responses – 48% related to issues, complaints, negative impacts
- d) Community Transport Positive Responses – 10% related to importance, value of, positive effects
- e) Community Transport Positive Responses – 8% related to issues, complaints, negative impacts
- f) Gold Card Responses – 9% related to funding, willingness to pay toward concession, retention of concession

Q13 Please tell us your home postcode:

About You

The following questions are about you and are designed to help us understand the views of different demographic groups. Please answer all the questions as fully as you can.

Q14 Are you...

66%

Female

34%

Male

Q15 What was your age on your last birthday?

Age 0-15	0%
Age 16 – 24	3%
Age 25 – 44	9%
Age 45 – 64	22%
Age 65 – 79	46%
Age 80+	20%

Q16 What is your ethnic group?

99%

White

.1%

Black/Black British

.1%

Chinese

.1%

Asian/Asian British

.4%

Mixed

Other

Q17 A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

29%

Yes

71%

No

Q18 If you answered 'Yes' what type of disability do you have? (Please select all that apply)

79%

Disability affecting mobility

20%

Disability affecting vision

5%

A learning disability

Other (Please specify)

27%

Disability affecting hearing

Thank you for completing this questionnaire