

Note of SO58 urgent decision teleconference with Chief Executive - Traffic & Transportation portfolio - Thursday 2 April 2020

Purpose: David Williams, Chief Executive, asked that a telephone conference facility be used for him to consult on the urgent decision required on the following four agenda items:

- LTP Implementation Plan 2020-2021
- Disabled Bus Pass
- Supported Bus Services
- Transport for South East - Proposal to government

Reason for urgency: these items were identified as needing decisions from the cancelled Traffic & Transportation Cabinet of 2 April 2020, for which papers had been published, due to the Coronavirus measures meaning public meetings were suspended.

Teleconference attendance:

Councillors - Lynne Stagg (Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation), Simon Boshier (Conservative opposition spokesperson), Graham Heaney (Labour opposition spokesperson)

Officers - David Williams (Chief Executive), Peter Baulf (City Solicitor), Simon Bell (Principal Public Transport Officer), Hayley Chivers (Acting Transport Planning Manager), Wayne Layton (Finance Manager), Felicity Tidbury (Acting Assistant Director of Transport).

The SO58 referral and paper had been circulated to all the required consultees.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Donna Jones.

The City Solicitor advised that members could declare their interests if they wished but it would not affect the decision making process.

LTP3 Implementation Plan 2020-2021

Hayley Chivers presented the report.

Members' Questions and Comments

Councillor Boshier asked how the Covid 19 pandemic would affect the 12-week LTP4 consultation planned for the summer. Felicity Tidbury said any consultation would be delayed due to the national circumstances. However, officers are still developing the strategy, in line with the LTP4 report taken to Cabinet on 11th February 2020. The LTP4 will cover the changing challenges in the city, but there is no requirement as to when it has to be adopted and LTP3 continues until 2031.

The Chief Executive advised that the report was written before the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic so he would therefore want to temper today's decision. The £835,000 allocated to LTP3 on 11 February is technically not ringfenced and the impact of Covid 19 on the council's finances means it is important that only business critical decisions and expenditure proceed at this stage. The wording for the decision

has to be phrased carefully in order to safeguard the whole of the council's finances. This could mean that less than £835,000 is spent on LTP3 Implementation Plan for 2020/21. If expenditure was reduced the decision to do so would be taken under SO58 and would not have to go to Full Council. However, reducing expenditure would neither undermine the council's commitment to LTP3 nor its relationship with the government. The Chief Executive advised that before undertaking major commitments the council needs to prioritise business critical matters and is not starting any work it is not contractually obliged to do. He asked officers to assess plans in the light of the current circumstances. Felicity Tidbury said officers undertake a LTP3 prioritisation process for all identified schemes within the programme. Some schemes are statutory requirements, for example, those relating to access for people with disabilities, public Traveline and rights of way.

The Chief Executive asked Wayne Layton to discuss financial aspects with Chris Ward. He noted that Adult Social Care had received details of amendments to the Care Act which dilute local authorities' statutory obligations, showing that the government is adjusting to the current circumstances.

Action point

- Felicity Tidbury to give members an overview showing how plans are prioritised.
- Wayne Layton to discuss finances with Chris Ward.

Members agreed with the recommendations.

Chief Executive's Decision

David Williams agreed to make the decisions as recommended in the report, subject to the following proviso:

Given the need to prioritise expenditure towards activity to respond to the Corona virus / Covid 19 pandemic, maintain business critical services and ensure the overall financial resilience of the council, the recommendations set out above are in principle only and the approval and commitment of any expenditure on any scheme identified in Appendix A is subject to the approval of the S151 Officer.

DECISION the Chief Executive:

- 1. Agreed to adopt the attached Local Transport Plan 3 Implementation Plan 2020/21 scheme list (Appendix A) is adopted;**
- 2. Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation and the Section 151 Officer to update the Local Transport Plan 3 Implementation with the attached proposed Local Transport Plan funded scheme list (Appendix A) as Portsmouth's adopted Implementation Plan for 2020/21.**
- 3. Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation and the Section 151 Officer to agree any minor amendments to the Implementation Plan that may be required to take account of future funding changes and policy announcements.**

4. **Noted that a new Local Transport Plan (LTP4) is currently being developed to outline how transport can address and respond to the current challenges being faced by the city.**

Disabled Bus Pass

Hayley Chivers introduced the report.

Members' Questions and Comments

Members agreed with the recommendation to continue with the free discretionary all day disabled bus pass. Councillor Boshier noted the recommendation supported the work being done by the Traffic, Environment & Community Safety Scrutiny Panel on access in the community.

Chief Executive's Decision

David Williams agreed to make the decision as recommended in the report.

DECISION the Chief Executive:

1. **Approved that the free discretionary all day travel for disabled persons' bus passes is continued as a permanent addition of Portsmouth's English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).**

Supported Bus Services

Hayley Chivers presented the report.

Members' Questions and Comments

Councillor Stagg thought there were problems with the no.6 and no.12 routes. She had noted low passenger numbers on the new no.12 route (which bypasses part of the old no.17 route). She suggested the council should recoup the money they were spending on this route. The no.22 route seemed satisfactory.

Simon Bell said there had been discussions with First Bus about diverting the no.8 route from Clarence Pier to the Southsea shops. Stagecoach may be willing to consider diverting the no.23 route. He confirmed the no.15 route (First Bus) terminates at the Hayling Ferry, but he had asked First Bus if they would consider extending the no.16 route to the ferry. However, all proposals are on hold due to Covid 19.

Members agreed with the recommendations, subject to normal service resuming as currently there are service reductions.

Chief Executive's Decision

David Williams agreed to make the decision as recommended in the report.

DECISION the Chief Executive:

1. **Extended the current contracts on all five supported bus services until 31 December 2020, unless commercial service changes are amended to cover these routes. This will allow time for a full tender process to be undertaken and**

the results brought to Traffic & Transportation Cabinet Member for consideration.

Transport for South East - Proposal to government

Hayley Chivers presented the report.

Members' Questions and Comments

Councillor Stagg noted the Portsmouth area has specific connectivity problems, particularly with East / West travel between Southampton, Portsmouth and Brighton, but Transport for the South East (TfSE) are beginning to work towards an agreement and vision for the whole area.

In response to questions from Councillor Heaney, Felicity Tidbury referred to paragraph 5.4.2 regarding the bus franchising proposal. Officers will continue to work closely with bus operators to grow and foster existing good relationships. Councillor Heaney thought it was important not to miss opportunities to improve rail travel (paragraph 5.4.6) and that there could be more emphasis on rail.

In response to questions from Councillor Boshier, Felicity Tidbury said Transport for London (TfL) are now part of TfSE and sit on the Partnership Board. Councillor Stagg thought the council and TfSE could learn from TfL as they receive considerable income. Councillor Boshier was concerned Kent County Council might dominate the partnership and that Kent and the area inside the M25 would disproportionately benefit from it. He was also concerned Highways England are not working closely enough with TfSE so initiatives could be disjointed.

The Chief Executive noted members broadly supported the recommendations but had some misgivings. He suggested sending a lobbying letter highlighting concerns over more emphasis on rail travel, engagement with Highways England and the importance of improved East / West connectivity. Concerns over the influence of Kent may change as Kent County Council has a new leader and other local and national politicians have changed. Members agreed to accept the proposal rather than request revised terms of reference.

The Chief Executive had written to the Solent LEP's (Local Enterprise Partnership) Chief Executive as so far the LEP has not been very supportive of TfSE.

Action point

Felicity Tidbury and Hayley Chivers to draft a letter to TfSE explaining members' concerns over more emphasis on rail, engagement with Highways England and the importance of improved East / West connectivity.

Chief Executive's Decision

David Williams agreed to make the decision as recommended in the report, subject to writing to TfSE to highlight issues raised by members.

DECISION the Chief Executive:

- 1. Provided formal consent for the submission of the Proposal to Government, which forms the basis of Transport for the South East becoming a statutory Sub-national Transport Body.**

(These decisions would be reported to all members via the Members' Information Service on 6 April 2020)

Any other business

Members raised the following issues:

- Security in the Park & Ride - it has CCTV and one of the taxi firms has about 50 cars there. It might be possible to ask the police if they could include the area in their patrols.
- Scams - the council is aware of telephone scams trying to sell personal protective equipment. Similar scams are escalating but Trading Standards and the police are taking action.

Action point

The Chief Executive to ask the police if they could include the Park & Ride in their patrols.

Meeting duration: 2.30 to 3.15 pm