

**COUNCIL SEMINAR  
25th November, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Lelliott (in the Chair); Councillors Atkin, Buckley, Cowles, McNeely, Pickering, Russell, John Turner and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor M.Clark), Councillors Beaumont, Currie, Ellis, Fleming, Hoddinott, Jepson, Khan, Pitchley, Price, Read, Roche, Rushforth, Sansome, Tweed, M. Vines, Watson and Whelbourn.

**SOUTH YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT EXCHANGE -  
BUDGET FOR 2016/2017.**

Councillor Lelliott, Advisory Cabinet Member, welcomed Kate Platts, the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's Finance Manager, to the seminar. Kate had prepared a presentation informing Rotherham's Elected Members about the budget setting process for 2016/2017.

It was explained that the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's (SYLTE) 2016/2017 budget was not yet agreed and the proposals that had been made to achieve required savings were only suggestions at this stage. Councillor Lelliott asked that the information shared not be taken out of the room as it may be taken out of context and lead to anxiety if the proposed savings were reported incorrectly. The final communication regarding the budget, and any necessary budget savings/service changes, would be made in January, 2016.

Kate provided an overview of the SYLTE's budget and the 2016/2017 process: -

- The SYLTE budget for 2015/2016 was approximately £70million;
- The vast majority of costs to the budget related to statutory work;
- The SYLTE was funded by a South Yorkshire Combined Authority Grant based on population percentage. At 19%, Rotherham contributed around £13million;
- The SYLTE aimed to support the local area priorities of connectivity, jobs, growth and education;
- The SYLTE had investigated renegotiating the amount spent on capital, including reducing interest rates;
- In the past, the SYLTE had had to remove services in response to the need to make budget savings. This included the removal of the FreeBee bus services in Rotherham;
- Paper timetables had also been phased out to make savings;
- Travel Information Centres (TiCs) within interchanges had been closed;
- The SYLTE had lost 195 posts over the previous 4 years, equating to approximately 50% of the organisation;

- Kate shared the five step process that the SYPTTE was employing to generate further savings of 10% for the 2016/2017 year: -
  - An external review had been conducted by White, Young and Green (WYG) at the request of the Chief Executives represented on the Sheffield Combined Authority;
  - Savings had been achieved through the Customer Channel Migration Panel, which dealt with the modernisation of services;
  - Additional income had been generated and opportunities for further income were being explored.
  
- A month-long public consultation process had taken place, ending on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 to capture service user views to guide priority and policy setting for: - funded bus services; child, elderly and disabled persons' concessions; and travel information;
- There had been a total of 2,437 responses;
- Respondents lived in: - Sheffield - 57%, Doncaster - 19%, Rotherham - 16% and Barnsley - 8%;
- Passes held by the respondents: - Elderly passes - 48%, 70p child - 26%, Disabled - 16%, None - 25%. (The totals added up to more than 100% due to household respondents who had multiple pass users living together).

Proposals being considered to achieve budget savings in 2016/2017: -

- Non-statutory concessions;
- Bus tendered services;
- Potential removals: - remove outdoor information kiosks; remove passenger information displays (PID) at interchange stands; remove PIDs at bus stops and shelters; remove printed timetables at bus stops.

Assessment of the proposed reductions, along with actions to mitigate their impact, had been explored.

Comments were raised and questions were asked in relation to Kate's presentation: -

Councillor Buckley asked how the respondent rate for each area compared to the bus usage for that area. He asked that the impact on travellers and potential mitigations be taken seriously.

Councillor Russell felt that the cuts as proposed in relation to the non-statutory concessions would hit the most vulnerable and hard to reach people.

Councillor Pickering asked for more detail about how the arrangement for travel in West Yorkshire operated. He asked that the SYPTTE make its priority ensuring that buses ran to their timetable.

## REPORT FOR INFORMATION - 25/11/15

Kate explained how Barnsley travellers in particular benefitted from the arrangements whereby they could travel to Leeds. Whilst one of the proposals was to remove the passenger information displays, there was a strong case for retaining them as services were becoming increasingly digitalised. The SYPTTE managed the PIDs on behalf of the operators who provided real-time information. Timeliness was monitored.

Councillor Atkin described how one of his elderly relatives had made use of his elderly persons' pass to travel on the bus and train to Scarborough and had really enjoyed the ability. Unfortunately this had now been removed.

Councillor Atkin understood and could read timetables easily and he also liked the digital displays as someone who understood technology. He thought that removing either style of timetable information would be likely to impact negatively on different groups of people.

Councillor Atkin asked for the child ticket to go across boundaries. Young people wanting to go to the cinema in his area had to take two buses, and pay two fares. Any increased fare would be accepted if tickets worked across boundaries.

Kate responded to Councillor Atkin's comments and questions and agreed that any removal of timetable information would impact on people, especially if they used buses infrequently. She explained the development work taking place on the provision of tickets that offered greater value for money.

Councillor Turner asked why PIDs were on some shelters but not others. Who made the decision over which shelter had a PID? Did PIDs say whether or not a bus was coming?

Kate explained how the SYPTTE managed the PIDs on behalf of the operators, who provided the information. There were two different types of PID, one of which did give more detailed 'real-time' bus arrival information. Kate agreed to provide more detailed information about how the PIDs worked.

Councillor Yasseen referred to local and national increases in hate crime. Some of these were taking place on public transport and were not managed or controlled by drivers.

Kate explained that the SYPTTE had a training academy that sought to influence the level of engagement and customer experience provided for transport users.

Councillor Turner asked whether elderly persons' passes were at risk of being removed? He also asked whether the SYPTTE was increasing its debt and what implications this could have for the future.

## REPORT FOR INFORMATION - 25/11/15

Kate explained that any statutory concessions, including the elderly persons' bus pass, would not be considered for budget savings as this was not possible. Any concessions that the SYPTE provided over and above the statutory concession rate were being considered.

Kate described how the organisation's reserves were being used to offset the amount owed, which was providing a quicker way of reducing the percentage that the organisation spent on capital financing.

Councillor Lelliott thanked Kate for her informative presentation and contribution to the discussion. She thanked those Elected Members in attendance for their participation in the seminar but was disappointed that more Members were not in attendance.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.