

**COUNCIL SEMINAR
28th September, 2016**

Present:- Councillor Lelliott (in the Chair); Councillors Allcock, Andrews, Atkin, Bird, Ellis, McNeely, Napper, Russell, Sansome, John Turner and Walsh.

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor Pitchley), Councillors Alam, Allen, Beaumont, Buckley, Maggi Clark, Cowles, Cusworth, Dave Cutts, Elliott, Hoddinott, Jepson, Mallinder, Rushforth, Senior, Sheppard, Watson and Wyatt and Parish Councillor J. R, Swann, Woodsetts Parish Council.

TRANSPORT AND BUS SERVICES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the seminar which had been arranged to facilitate discussion about the following transportation issues:-

(1) Public Transport / Bus Services

A presentation was made by Mr. Chris Roberts (South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive) about:-

- the way in which bus services are operated in Rotherham and South Yorkshire;
- the role of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive;
- the way in which the Rotherham Bus Partnership has developed;
- the methods of consultation regarding changes to bus services;
- Transport Act 1985 – deregulation and tendered services;
- types of services – eg: educational transport; the general bus network;
- the Sheffield Bus Partnership, established in October 2012 for 5 years;
- the Rotherham Bus Partnership, established in July 2014 for 5 years;
- the Doncaster Bus Partnership, established in May 2016 for 5 years;
- the Barnsley Bus Partnership is to be introduced in January 2017;
- Investment - network development; marketing; vehicles standards and emissions; infrastructure schemes; maintaining a stable network and consulting on changes;
- Partnership achievements, especially punctuality and reliability of services;
- the three main service change dates in each year : January, April and September;
- changes to commercial services are registered with the Traffic Commissioner (56 days in advance) and no consultation is required;
- Significant changes - reduction in frequency, days or hours; change of route;
- Minor changes - all other changes, e.g. slight alterations to timetables;
- consultation with the Local Authority and with the Passenger Transport Executive.

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The questions and answers included the following matters:-

- levels of public satisfaction with bus services (annual Autumn survey of bus passengers);
- effectiveness of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive in responding to issues raised by the general public;
- reliable, quality bus services have produced increasing passenger usage, even though there has been a reduction in the overall number of bus services;
- effectiveness and timeliness of consultation with Borough Councillors about changes to local bus services;
- effectiveness of consultation with the general public – use of public meetings, including Borough Council Area Assembly meetings;
- the necessary budget savings which had to be made led to the decision to cease printing paper timetables;
- timely provision of public information about temporary bus route alterations during the periods of significant works in the highway;
- the importance of bus services for people without access to other means of transport (e.g.: very elderly people); the impact of a shortage of bus services in terms of people's quality of life;
- reference to specific, continuing concerns about bus services in certain localities : Swinton/Kilnhurst; Bramley/Maltby/Ravenfield;
- the quietness of modern vehicle engines and the impact upon pedestrians and other road users;
- the bus rapid transport system;
- modern methods of multi-ticket options (eg: Travelmaster) permitting access to the services of different bus operators;
- the effects of competition between the various bus operators;
- the costs of bus operation and the use of different sizes of bus in different local areas;
- the possible future responsibility for public transport of the Sheffield City Region Authority.

Mr. Roberts was thanked for his informative presentation and Members are to be provided with a copy of the presentation slides.

(2) RMBC Transport Liaison Group

Discussion took place on the role and function and terms of reference of the RMBC Transport Liaison Group.

Members suggested the following arrangements in relation to the meetings of the Liaison Group:

- retain the existing pattern of quarterly meetings (March, June, September, December);
- consideration of all relevant transportation issues (transport in general), including timely consultation on bus service alterations;
- consideration, at least once per year, of the performance of the Rotherham Bus Partnership;
- meetings shall be open to the public;
- the Chair shall be the appropriate Cabinet Member; the Vice-Chair shall be the Council's other appointed representative to the Sheffield City Region Transport Committee;
- representation of one Councillor per Electoral Ward, allowing substitution from the Ward and maintaining political proportionality;
- retain the existing Parish Council representation;
- invitations to other appropriate external organisations/individuals for discussion of specific transportation matters (eg: Pensioners' Action Group);
- consistent and regular attendance at meetings of representatives of the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, the bus and rail operators, airport officials, as well as appropriate Borough Council officers;
- Elected Members shall submit questions, in writing (or by electronic mail) fourteen days in days prior to each Liaison Group meeting, thus allowing time for answers to be furnished at the meetings.

Members discussed the recent public safety issue affecting the Rotherham Passenger Transport Interchange and acknowledged the responsibility and control of the South Yorkshire Police in respect of such incidents.

Members also noted that the 'real time' bus service information displayed at certain bus shelters was an automated system, based on the GPS tracking of the travelling buses; there was no manual control of this system.

It was agreed that Elected Members be provided with a copy of the amended terms of reference of the RMBC Transport Liaison Group.

(3) Strategic Traffic and Transportation Issues

Dr. A. Withill (Interim Traffic and Transportation Manager, Environment and Development Services), provided information about the following

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issues affecting highways, traffic and transportation in the Rotherham Borough area:-

- recent discussions concerning the HS2 high speed railway route – noting that the Government Department for Transport has been notified of this Council's stated opposition to the proposed change of the railway route away from Meadowhall;
- alleviation of the traffic congestion on the A633 corridor between Rotherham town centre at St Ann's Roundabout and Parkgate (Forge Way) – proposed bid to the Government Department for Transport 'new rail station fund' for 75% grant funding for a new mainline rail station in Rotherham;
- delayed progress with the Tram-Train project linking Meadowhall, the Rotherham town centre and Parkgate; possible new station on the edge of the Rotherham town centre (Greasbrough Road);
- proposed refurbishment of the Rotherham Passenger Transport Interchange expected to begin during the Summer 2017;
- planned highway improvements to serve the Waverley development, including the Advanced Manufacturing Park;
- proposed construction of hydrogen power vehicle station, to be situated near to the Advanced Manufacturing Park at Waverley;
- various highway initiatives and schemes, including bus priority at junctions, cycle lanes; pupils cycling to school; living streets; schemes which have an economic impact in terms of access to places of employment.

Members noted the information about highways and transportations schemes.