

# **Rutland County Council**

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Scoping Document: Task and Finish Groups; Working Groups; Evidence Gathering etc.**

#### **1. Topic**

1.1 Public Bus Transport in Rutland

#### **2. Purpose**

2.1 To provide evidence based advice to Cabinet and Council to help shape the future commissioning of bus services within Rutland.

#### **3. Members (Identify Chairperson)**

To be confirmed

#### **4. Portfolio holders**

Cllr Rosemary Powell

#### **5. Officers**

- Emma Odabas
- Angela Culleton
- Penny Sharp

#### **6. Rationale**

(Think about the challenges/concerns – what needs to change?)

6.1 The objective is to secure a road based public transport system which meets the needs of all residents in Rutland and is cost effective. This means that as far as possible scholars transport and public

transport is integrated and community based services, such as the Uppingham Hopper, compliment provision.

- 6.2 Public transport is essential for many people, especially those on low income and those unable to drive. It is the means by which essential services are accessed and leisure activities undertaken; thus being essential to the quality of life for many.
- 6.3 This review will help deliver RCC's Corporate Strategy Priority 2: Living sustainably and combatting the climate crisis through the power of choice, the removal of barriers, and real collective action; specifically commitment 9: We will support sustainable methods of transport through cycle routes, bridleways, public footpaths and community led transport.

## **7. Background**

- 7.1 In recent years the major bus operators providing routes within Rutland have asked for increased levels of subsidy and, in some cases, handed back routes. Our neighbouring local authorities have reduced or ceased subsidising some cross border routes into their authority areas, thus making them non-viable overall and as our population ages the need for public transport increases. Like all local authorities RCC's overall budget is under immense pressure and cannot continue to increase subsidies on public transport so a major review of how public transport is commissioned in the County is necessary.
- 7.2 Rutland County Council Produced a Transport Plan, its 4<sup>th</sup>, in 2018

[file:///C:/Users/gwaller/Downloads/Draft%20Moving%20Rutland%20Forward%20\(Full%20Document\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/gwaller/Downloads/Draft%20Moving%20Rutland%20Forward%20(Full%20Document).pdf)

and, in order to apply for grant funding under the Government's National Bus Strategy "Bus Back Better", it produced a further policy in 2022.

<file:///C:/Users/gwaller/Downloads/Rutland%20EP%20Plan%20and%20Scheme%20->

[%20March%202022.pdf](file:///C:/Users/gwaller/Downloads/Rutland%20EP%20Plan%20and%20Scheme%20-%20March%202022.pdf) Whilst a well-researched and comprehensive document this did not succeed in getting Government funding and without that funding a different approach will have to be taken to deliver bus services in the County. The basic premise of this document, however, of moving from a scheduled service to a demand responsive service, is still valid. The Council aims to produce a new Local Transport Plan by December 2023 and this scrutiny review will contribute to this.

## **8. Timetable**

8.1 To report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee by March 2023.

## **9. Methodology/Approach**

Members will:

- Consider the work currently being undertaken by officers in relation to DRT and evaluate the options they produce, taking account of available national guidance.
- View other DRT operations in rural areas for example in Cambridgeshire (<https://transport.cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/buses/demand-responsive-travel/> and <https://transport.cambridgeshirepeterborough->

[ca.gov.uk/buses/demand-responsive-travel/ting/](http://ca.gov.uk/buses/demand-responsive-travel/ting/) ; and in North Yorkshire

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/news/article/north-yorkshire-pilots-dial-bus-service-improve-rural-rides>

- Review national guidance e.g. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/demand-responsive-transport-local-authority-toolkit/demand-responsive-transport-local-authority-toolkit#action3>
- Review national research such as [https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/file\\_store/production/12981/B9C57C8D-4AD9-4ED6-80E7-C05258B34516.pdf](https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/file_store/production/12981/B9C57C8D-4AD9-4ED6-80E7-C05258B34516.pdf) or <https://www.local.gov.uk/systra-lga-bus-report>

## 10. Evidence Sources

In addition to those mentioned above Members will consider the following:

- Legislation in relation to managing public transport.
- Current RCC policy and service plans
- Performance indicators such as bus usage data, customer complaints and RCC spend per user on public transport.
- The RCC's 2013 Task and Finish Group's recommendations regarding transport.

## 11. Witnesses

- Service users (via the RCC currently established user group)
- Bus Companies
- Call Connect (Lincolnshire)

- Other local authorities running DRT (e.g. Cambridgeshire)

## **12. Other considerations**

- There is a necessity to manage the budget and this needs to be considered. However, it is recognised that investment may be necessary.