

# **Best Value Review of Public Transport**

## **Presentation to Scrutiny Commission**

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2001**

# **Best Value Review of Public Transport**

## **1 - Introduction**

**Scope** - All public transport services except:

- concessionary travel
- mainstream home to school transport

### **Process**

- Member Panel
- started work October 2000
- 'the 4Cs'
- two main stages of analysis
- now further consultation
- implementation plan late 2001
- review inspection early 2002

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## 2 - Challenge to the service

- public transport contributes strongly to Local Transport Plan objectives for Accessibility and Environment
- customers expect a good level of service, as does government
- this could not be achieved without Council intervention
- nor could we provide the service by other means
- but this does not imply any particular *level* of service
- nor does it imply all service provision is cost-effective

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## 3 - Bus Service Policy

### Issues:

- services not meeting customer expectations
- need for better fit with corporate objectives
- bus subsidy policy reactive
- extra funding, and national developments, suggest more proactive approach
- some existing services offer poor value for money

### Options analysis:

- examined key objectives of meeting access needs and providing alternative to the car
- concluded need regular services for credible access
- need integrated network of regular services, with community-focussed approach for other areas

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## **Bus Service Policy continued**

Policy proposals:

- improved network of hourly daytime services
- community-based approach for 'deep rural' areas
- improved network of hourly evening and Sunday services
- 'school specials' associated with school travel plans
- improved interchange to help travel across the network
- emphasis on quality and promotion to ensure network can be maintained
- annual review process to ensure fit to budget

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### **Bus Service Policy continued**

Policy in practice:

- with existing funding, around 95% of people would have an hourly daytime service
- increase from 27% to 38% of rural population with hourly service
- similar increases on evenings/Sundays
- need to ensure few 'losers' from new policy
- existing level of funding about right - less does not produce effective network, more risks poor value for money

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## **4 - Bus Service Quality**

Improving commercially run services:

- fundamental limitation in lack of statutory powers
- but can work through existing Quality Bus Partnerships to help commercial services be more effective
- recommendations on improving the work of QBPs

Improving contract bus services - Build on existing initiatives particularly to:

- apply tighter quality checks before awarding contract
- enhance inspection/enforcement
- measure better the views of customers and set targets accordingly

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## **5 - Bus Service Cost**

90% of bus work already tendered on the open market

Competitive market locally

But increasing market price and reducing commercial bus service networks a long-term problem.

No radical measure available but can combat by:

- further improvement in managing the market
- keep case for vehicle purchase or in-house operation under review
- help expansion of voluntary sector transport
- develop market for taxis and small minibuses



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## **6 - Bus Passenger Information**

- Key issue for customers and new requirement from government
- Partnership with bus companies necessary for Bus Information Strategy
- Increased emphasis on electronic means but need range of types
- Issues of availability of information and maintenance of displays
- Requires some increase in County Council spend

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## **7 - Rail Services**

For the Ivanhoe Stage 1 rail service:

- The service does not appear to contribute to sustainability objectives, or offer value for money for the authority
- This may be characteristic of this particular service rather than a general finding
- The Council should pursue the approach already made to the Strategic Rail Authority to take over funding

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## **Rail Services continued**

For other rail policy:

- New stations and improved interchange are justified in specific instances
- But other agencies have the responsibility for general maintenance of stations and services

For cost and quality:

- On the Ivanhoe stage 1 service, these are mostly outside the Council's control
- But further promotion to increase fares revenue is justified

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## **8 - Accessible Transport**

- Main policy issue is lack of countywide coverage
- Close working with voluntary sector providers, and increased spend, necessary to correct this
  
- Need to make taxis more useful, through mixed fleets and better customer care
- And through improved concessions for disabled people
  
- Need to ensure new low-floor buses have matching raised kerbs at stops
  
- Some service integration issues to be pursued, with Social Services, health authorities and S.E.N. transport

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## **9 - Service Management**

Three main issues revealed:

- Externalisation. No obvious case but better considered in wider context of Highway Services Review
- Integration of transport procurement. Prima facie case made - Panel recommend work on this should be brought forward
- Trading agreements with Leicester. Generally helpful to the Council but issue of officer time commitment to be resolved