



**CABINET – 23RD OCTOBER 2001**

**BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT: OUTCOME OF  
CONSULTATION AND DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ACTING DIRECTOR OF  
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To present the results of consultation on the Member Review Panel final report, to present a draft implementation plan for the Review and to ask for a Cabinet response to both the final report and the draft implementation plan.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Cabinet:
  - a. Notes the results of consultation on the Member Review Panel final report
  - b. Notes the comments of the Scrutiny Commission on the same
  - c. Approves the proposed responses to comments as set out in this report
  - d. As its response to the Review, approves the recommendations in the final report for submission to Scrutiny bodies for comment
  - e. Approves the draft implementation plan for consultation with the Scrutiny bodies, in principle subject to consideration of the resource implications in the budget process.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

3. Consultation on the final report has produced a number of comments. None of these cause officers to propose alterations to the Review Panel's recommendations but a number of the comments should be taken note of in the implementation process. The draft implementation plan takes forward the recommendations of the final report in a way designed to allow them to be implemented in the most cost-effective way possible.

**Timetable for Decisions Including Scrutiny**

4. The timetable remains that set out and approved in the 11th September report to Cabinet. Scrutiny will now be asked to comment on the Cabinet's response to the Review and on the draft implementation plan at the Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 29th October 2001 and at a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 31st October 2001. These comments will come back to Cabinet on 6th November before going forward to Council on 28th November. Best Value Inspection is programmed for the January to March period in 2002.

## **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

5. The review of this service has been undertaken in accordance with the government's Best Value guidance and the County Council's own Best Value review process and procedures. Details of the service, current policy and previous decisions are set out in detail in the Panel's final report. A copy of the Panel's recommendations is reproduced for convenience at Appendix 4.

## **Resource Implications**

6. The Panel's recommendations would ultimately result in overall expenditure for the service broadly in line with existing budgets and available sources of external funding. However, there are resource implications for five areas which would represent a net additional cost in the short term.
- A phased increase to £10,000 a year for improvements to bus service quality standards
  - Bus passenger information, where a phased increase in annual expenditure from £60,000 to around £100,000 is envisaged;
  - The provision of accessible transport services, where to secure adequate countywide coverage a phased increase in expenditure from £165,000 to £355,000 a year is envisaged.
  - Support for the Ivanhoe Stage 1 rail service, where the Panel is recommending action to ensure that support for the service is passed to the Strategic Rail Authority. This, if agreed, would release savings of £255,000 (2001/02 predicted outturn) for the County Council to use elsewhere.
  - A temporary increase in staff costs to allow the implementation of the proposals over and above the continuing workload. Maximum extra expenditure in any one year is estimated to be £45,000.
7. The phasing of these changes in expenditure is considered in the Implementation Plan and summarised in the table below. This concludes that net extra funding requirements will total approximately £80,000 in 2002/03, with -£75,000 in 2003/04 and £15,000 in 2004/05.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Extra funding requirement by year</i>		
	2002/03	2003/04	Full year thereafter
Introduce new bus and community transport services	£0	£0	£0
Improve quality standards on contract bus services	£5,000	£10,000	£10,000
Introduce a bus information strategy	£10,000	£40,000	£40,000
Progress the rail development strategy	£0	-£255,000	-£255,000
L. Expand accessible transport to give countywide coverage	£20,000	£100,000	£190,000
Extra staff resources, including use of consultants	£45,000	£30,000	£30,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>-£75,000</b>	<b>£15,000</b>

8. Although expenditure on improved local bus services is predicted to be cost neutral, it should be noted that there has been a trend in recent years of bus contract price rises and commercial bus service withdrawals. This means that there is a substantial risk of overspends as the new services are introduced. Every attempt will be made to control expenditure within the proposed allocations.

**Comments of the County Treasurer**

9. The progress on the implementation plan will be subject to consideration of the resource implications within the 2002/3 budget process, particularly in relation to the availability of resource to begin implementation of the priorities in the medium term strategy.
10. In the longer term, if the proposals are to be cost neutral, expansion of accessible transport to give county wide coverage will be dependent on the Strategic Rail Authority taking over funding for the Ivanhoe Stage 1 Rail Service. If this is delayed consideration could be given to using some of the savings from the proposed changes to the concessionary travel scheme.

**Circulation Under Sensitive Issues Procedure**

None.

**Officers to Contact**

General:	James Holden	(265 7244)
Review Process:	Andy Brown	(265 6096)
Resource Issues:	Pat Sartoris	(265 7642)

## **PART B**

### **Background**

### **Consultation**

11. Consultation has been carried out in accordance with the schedule approved by Cabinet on 11th September. Invitations were sent out to 75 people to attend the Stakeholder Day. Copies of the summary report were sent to all parish councils with an invitation to comment. Copies of the report were placed in libraries and on the Council's website; posters were displayed advertising this and comments invited. All staff of the Planning and Transportation Department were invited to comment and the trade unions were consulted.
12. 23 people attended the Stakeholder Day and 21 other representations were made. These are summarised in Appendix 1, along with suggested responses.

### **Scrutiny**

13. A presentation on the final report was given to a special meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 20th September, to which all Members were invited. The final report was subsequently considered by Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 27th September and the Scrutiny Commission on 3rd October. Their comments, with suggested responses, are given at Appendix 2.

### **Implementation Plan**

14. A draft implementation plan has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 3. This is intended to demonstrate how the recommendations of the Panel's final report can be carried forward to implementation. It considers not only the tasks directly involved but also the staff and financial resources required, the outside constraints which may affect implementation and the potential risks involved.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

15. Section 6 of the Panel's final report sets out a number of findings and recommendations aimed at improving public transport provision for people with mobility impairments.

### **Background Papers**

None.

## **Appendix 1 - Main Consultation comments – from Stakeholder Day and individual contributions**

(Note: Many comments related to specific local issues, points of detail or other matters not within the scope of the review. These are not noted here but are available for reference.)

<b><i>Comment</i></b>	<b><i>Suggested response</i></b>
<i>Bus service policy</i>	
The review was insufficiently focussed on persuading people from cars and did not consult non-users sufficiently	Persuading people from cars was identified as one of two key objectives. Considerable evidence on the views of non-users was available to the review
Hourly bus services policy endorsed	Noted
There should be a stronger emphasis on travel time, particularly for commuters	The emphasis on hourly services with direct routes will help, but buses are inevitably slower than cars
There should be more flexibility in the prescribed frequencies – more than hourly in urban areas, less than hourly in rural and evenings and Sundays	The proposed policy includes steps to improve frequency above hourly in urban areas through QBPs. The review analysis suggests that dropping below hourly frequency undermines the credibility of a service for meeting a range of access needs. Accept more flexibility required evenings and Sundays.
More appropriate to have a 5 minute walking distance than a 10 minute one	Not realistic to run buses within 400 metres of all people in rural areas; with a maximum of 800 metres a majority will anyway be within 400 metres
Concerned that successful experimental services developed over last few years may be lost in new approach, e.g. Vale Hopper evening service	Flexible approach called for with evening and Sunday services and should allow such as the Vale Hopper to be maintained
There should be more detail on how out-of-county links will be developed (Vale Transport Focus Group, and others)	Some more detail in draft Implementation Plan but mechanisms are already established
The case should be made to government for a Strategic Transport Authority covering all transport modes, and lobbying of government against the present deregulated system	Outside the scope of the review
Create new fast route for buses into Leicester	Noted

Effective consultation with potential users as well as existing users is vital	Agreed – implementation plan provides for this
Case for interchange has not been made	Review has analysed requirements for successful interchange
Review should be more clear on how local consultation is to be carried out	Draft Implementation Plan provides more detail
Not clear how priorities between services will be determined if budget constraints	Proposed annual review process provides for transparent decision making
There should be a stronger emphasis on through-ticketing	The importance of this is noted in the Review and covered in the draft implementation plan
There should be more reference to the role of district councils	Districts have important roles in the work of QBPs, in the Rural Transport Partnerships, in the provision of infrastructure and the related activity of travel concession provision
Not enough consideration of the differing needs of the young and the old	Analysis attempted to do this
Frequent Sunday and Bank Holiday services are needed	Noted
There should be more reference to the role of Rural Transport Partnerships and the Parish Transport Fund	Both have an important role to play and will be fully integrated in the implementation of the new rural services
Review should be more ambitious about what bus services can achieve in rural areas, including reduction in car use and access to jobs and facilities	The review sets ambitious targets but needs also to be realistic about the scope for attracting people from cars in circumstances where public transport cannot provide a competitive alternative
Buses should carry bicycles	Unlikely to be feasible except in limited circumstances
Integrated transport should be more strongly stressed	Believe there is an appropriate weight given to convenient interchange and through ticketing
<i>Bus service quality</i>	
No thought has been given to operator incentives to improve quality	Noted. Limited scope but will be considered in implementation
<i>Bus service information</i>	
County Council proposed role too modest	Government requirements indicate role of local authority compared to role of bus companies
Various specific comments on	To be considered in preparation of the

types of information which are favoured	Bus Information Strategy
The Traveline service should not be charged at national call rates and government should be lobbied to change it	For calls of short duration there is little difference in the charge. It is unlikely that the DTLR, having only recently taken the decision, will change it at this stage
Notification of service changes should be improved	Agree - provision to be made in Bus Information Strategy
Parish Councils could play a greater role in circulating bus service information	Agree - to be considered in detailed compiling of bus information strategy
<i>Rail service policy and quality</i>	
Why should the SRA be expected to take over support of the Ivanhoe Line stage 1 if it performs so poorly in environmental and financial terms?	Firstly the SRA's criteria may be somewhat different from those of the County Council; secondly the integration of the route into a longer service could improve its environmental and financial performance
Question review's conclusions on Ivanhoe Line environmental performance	Review analysis is sound but does not necessarily apply to all local rail services
Support for the continued operation of the Ivanhoe Stage 1 service even if the SRA do not take over financing of it	Noted
Support for the development of the Ivanhoe Line Stage 2 project. Should be greater emphasis on Stage 2 with full integration with Stage 1, particularly as the multi-modal 'has proposed' that the project should be taken forward. Reference to future of Stage 2 being a proposal for consideration elsewhere is not seen to be helpful (North West Leics District and others)	Noted. The Review did not look in detail at Ivanhoe Stage 2 as extensive analysis work had already been done.
Develop Park and Ride at smaller stations	Limited scope but some progress is being made, e.g. at Narborough and Syston
<i>Accessible transport</i>	
The proposal to extend to countywide coverage is welcomed but there is an issue with managing the services and attracting enough volunteers	These problems are recognised. The draft implementation plan envisages work over a substantial period to help overcome them

County Council spend on these services is far too low – substantial unmet demand	Review recommendations address this
Agree the proposal to work to increase supply of accessible taxis	Noted
Voluntary sector transport has problems in expanding and should not be viewed as a cheap option	Noted – implementation plan proposes work with voluntary sector partner on these issues
Centralised booking systems may not be feasible	See above
Support should be provided for accessible transport for work purposes	It is through main bus service support policies, but analysis suggests there is other funding available for people travelling to work who cannot use buses
Introduction of low-floor buses vital for giving choice – they don't just help mobility-impaired people	Review recommendations aimed at helping to speed the introduction of low-floor buses
Support for the idea of a centralised booking system	Review recommendation proposes this is explored
Support for the idea of using the spare time of County Council vehicles	Noted



## Appendix 2 - Comments of Scrutiny

1. The Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> September resolved that its work should be focussed on specific issues which it would examine in detail and that accordingly the Scrutiny Commission should be advised:
  - a. That in the time available to it the Committee does not feel able to provide an analysis of the Best Value Review Panel's findings bearing in mind the detailed work already undertaken by the Panel and the consultation process currently being undertaken
  - b. (Relating to household waste)
  - c. Proposes to consider the implementation of the Bus Support Policy and changes thereto in some detail in early 2002, particularly in relation to impact on services provided, the difficulties of engaging with major local bus operators and the issue of cross-boundary services.
  
2. The Scrutiny Commission on 3<sup>rd</sup> October resolved to advise the Cabinet that it:
  - a. Supports the two key public transport objectives
  - b. Supports the recommendations and conclusions of the Best Value Review Panel report subject to a number of comments.
  
3. The comments, and suggested response, are set out in the table below.

<i>Comment</i>	<i>Suggested response</i>
That a draft implementation plan is prepared and provided to the Scrutiny arm for consideration and comment prior to the recommendations on the Panel's report being put to the County Council	Agree
That the implementation of the proposals should be subject to the development of effective alternative community transport services to rural areas not served by the proposed hourly service. In this regard the Commission was of the view that for each community there should be agreed arrangements for a minimum level of service/funding, the level to be determined following thorough consultation with the community and closely matching the needs identified	Agreed that there should be a fair allocation of available resources between communities, though simplistic minimum service levels should be avoided. Such measures will need to be developed during implementation. Draft implementation plan provides for this.
That implementation of the proposals should be subject to ensuring effective links and interchange arrangements with the hourly service routes and that, if	Agreed. Effective interchange is seen as a key part of the proposals and the implementation timescale will

appropriate, this should be done following the introduction and assessment of pilot projects	allow for pilot projects. (Some pilot work on interchange has already been carried out)
That services to out-of-county towns/centres should be of equal quality to those to county towns/centres and that the implementation plan should include a commitment to working with adjoining Councils to achieve this	This was always intended. Draft implementation plan contains the requested commitment.
That the issue of quality and reliability of services, particularly in relation to night and weekend services, should be reflected as a priority in the implementation plan	It is – all main actions are programmed for the first year of implementation. Believe quality and reliability are vital for all bus services, not just those operating evenings and weekends
That the potential opportunities of utilising excess and 'off-peak' capacity in the in-house County Council fleet (particularly Social Services and Education) and voluntary sector fleets should be further explored and any proposals arising therefrom should be reported to the Commission for consideration	The potential for making more use of such vehicles is flagged up in the Panel's report and taken forward in the draft implementation plan.

**Best Value Review of Public Transport Services**  
**Implementation Plan**

## **Section 1 – Introduction**

- 1.1 This Plan describes how the recommendations in the Panel report are to be brought into effect. The processes involved are interdependent and the analysis therefore builds up to give the total picture in the following way:
  - Section 3 describes the actions necessary for implementing each recommendation
  - Section 4 assesses the overall staff time necessary to achieve these actions to a realistic timescale and sets out how that time is to be provided
  - Section 5 assesses the necessary funding to carry out the Plan, the availability of those funds and whether that sets any limits on timescales
  - Section 6 assesses how the Plan is to be communicated to stakeholders and how the necessary commitment is to be secured
  - Section 7 describes the improvements necessary to existing support systems, including I.T., and how these are to be provided
  - Section 8, on the basis of the analysis above, sets out the realistically achievable timescale for the whole implementation, and related targets
  - Section 9 sets out the arrangements for monitoring and dealing with contingencies.
- 1.2 The full Plan can only be laid out once this interdependent analysis is complete. For ease of reference, summary tables are set out as Section 2 of the document.
- 1.3 Implementation will be carried out by staff of the Public Transport Group in Planning and Transportation, assisted by consultants. A steering group, led by the Public Transport Co-ordinator, will ensure that implementation is carried out according to this Plan.

## **Section 2 – Summary Implementation Plan**

Note: The activities are each cross-referenced to the relevant recommendation in the Review Panel's final report. Recommendations 8 and 24 have no specific activity associated with them.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Main actions required (Section 3)</i>	<i>Extra staff resource? (Section 4)</i>	<i>Extra funding? (Section 5)</i>	<i>Timescale and targets (Section 8)</i>	<i>Risks? (Sections 6 &amp; 9)</i>
A. Introduce bus and community transport services to meet the requirements of the new policy ( <i>Reco 1</i> )	Plan services in close consultation with communities and schools, tender for contracts, introduce, promote and monitor, with growth targets; plan infrastructure improvements; plan longer-term strategy	Substantial, specific skills in project management and publicity needed. Some extra resource from Rural Transport Partnership	£0, but substantial risk	A1. Achieve hourly daytime service coverage for 95% of people by end of 2003 A2. Complete provision of evening and Sunday hourly services, within available funding, by end 2003 A3. Introduce new rural services to meet the expressed priorities, covering all areas away from the hourly services network, by summer 2004 A4. Introduce new schools services, in partnership with schools undertaking school travel plans, within available funding by summer 2004	Substantial risk that subsidy cost will be greater than predicted; risk of bus companies not co-operating fully
B. Establish a new process of annual review of bus service performance ( <i>Recos 2,3,4</i> )	Detail process and vfm measures, secure appropriate management information systems	Significant time for developing new management info systems	£0	B1. Have the new system in place for testing in autumn 2002 B2. Modify as necessary and use successfully in spring 2003	Securing required monitoring and financial analysis systems

C. Work to improve the effectiveness of Quality Bus Partnerships (Recos 5,6,9)	Derive template formal agreement, put in place, assess all future projects against good practice, monitor overall effectiveness	Some time needed but available through reallocation of existing duties	£0	C1. Put in place new procedures and monitoring arrangements by autumn 2002 C2. Conclude a general review of the effectiveness of QBPs, and make recommendations accordingly, starting in early 2004 and concluding by summer 2004	Commitment of bus companies
D. Improve passenger feedback on bus service standards (Recos 7,9)	Review previous Bus Users Panel, check good practice elsewhere, consult on and introduce new system	Some	£0	D1. New system in place by summer 2002 D2. Effectiveness reviewed and any necessary adjustments made by spring 2004	Staff time to make feedback representative
E. Lobby government to strengthen the work of the Traffic Commissioners (Reco 10)	Assess best approach, carry out, review	-	£0	E1. Initial lobbying carried out by May 2002 E2. Review situation and decide on any further action by end 2002	None
F. Work to improve the quality of contract bus services (Reco 10)	Produce tighter definition of quality standards, introduce stronger pre-contract testing of quality, develop inspection and enforcement system, test and introduce better ways of assessing customer satisfaction	Significant extra time to set up systems, plus ongoing admin support	£5,000 in 2002/03, rising to £10,000 thereafter	F1. New procedures for specifying required quality and assessing the competence of tenderers in place for testing by summer 2002. F2. Testing programme complete and decision taken on permanent adoption by spring 2003 F3. Set up revised arrangements for inspection and enforcement by May 2002 F4. Define minimum quality standards and set targets based on this, by end 2002 F5. Review achievement of targets and the operation of new systems, by end 2003 F6. First customer satisfaction surveys complete and targets set for future customer satisfaction levels, by end 2002	Commitment of bus companies to improving quality; ability to monitor effectively

G. Improve competitiveness of bus supply by improving interaction with the market (Recos 11,14)	Set up revised tendering process, establish operator forum, improve management information, promote improved supply of taxis and minibuses	Some	£0	G1. New systems and operator forum in place by end 2002 G2. Review state of market, using appropriate indicators, in spring 2003	Securing the improved management information systems
H. Test the case for purchasing vehicles and keep case for in-house operation under review (Recos 12,13,14)	Complete analysis of option of buying vehicles and if appropriate move to a trial; keep in touch with developments on in-house operation	Some	£0	H1. Case for purchasing vehicles assessed and carried forward if justified by spring 2002. H2. Review of in-house operation in mid 2003, or earlier if circumstances change	None
I. Draw up and implement a bus information strategy (Recos 15,16,17)	Set out proposals, consult and introduce	Substantial staff time required to introduce, possibly some extra time thereafter	£10,000 extra in 2002/03, £40,000 a year extra thereafter	I1. Strategy adopted by autumn 2002 I2. Review progress on agreed strategy implementation plan by summer 2003 and annually thereafter	Securing commitment of bus companies; introducing effective management arrangements to secure quality
J. Ensure that work on the development of the Leicestershire rail network is	Pursue transfer of Ivanhoe 1 funding to SRA, update case for other stations and maintain dialogue with rail	Some	£0 in 2002/03, save £255,000 in future years if	J1. Take all available steps to ensure responsibility for Ivanhoe Stage 1 service is passed to SRA from April 2003. J2. Complete review of station interchange and draw up plans for remaining implementation by end 2002	State of the rail industry nationally - outside Council's control

progressed (Recos 18,19,20, 21)	industry, review station interchange with partners and progress plans		SRA take over Ivanhoe 1. (+capital spend)	J3. Review the case for the new local rail stations in the county and 'package' for presentation to the SRA and others by spring 2003 or earlier if re-franchising is brought forward J4. Take all available opportunities to lobby for effective service provision to Leicestershire by the time the re-award of the Central Trains franchise is concluded	
K. Improve the quality and competitiveness of the Ivanhoe stage 1 rail service (Recos 22,23,25)	Improve monitoring of quality and follow up with Central Trains; prepare and introduce new promotions plan	Some; specific expertise required for promotions plan	-£2,000 in 2002/03 (There- after assume absorbed by SRA)	K1. Complete promotions plan by summer 2002. K2. Implement in autumn 2002; review results and repeat annually until such time as the SRA takes over responsibility K3. Introduce the improved quality monitoring regime by summer 2002 K4. Produce customer satisfaction measures and use monitoring results to define target increases in punctuality/reliability and customer satisfaction, by autumn 2002 K5. Review progress against these targets with Central Trains annually until service is taken over by SRA	Making sufficient staff time available
L. Expand accessible transport to provide countywide coverage (Recos 26,33)	Discuss with voluntary sector and social services/SEN, prepare implementation plan with targets, introduce and monitor	Significant time to work with voluntary sector and other partners	£20,000 in 2002/03; £100,000 in 2003/04; £190,000 in future years	L1. Implementation plan in place by summer 2002. L2. Countywide coverage achieved by autumn 2004	Ability of voluntary sector partners to expand; risk of cost overrun; staff time



M. Work with voluntary schemes to improve service competitiveness and quality (Recos 30,36)	Devise, consult on and introduce new comments system; work with schemes to assess scope for more cost-effective bookings system	Some	£0	M1. Customer feedback system devised and in place by end 2002 M2. First year's results analysed and appropriate action taken by spring 2004 M3. Complete review of booking systems by end 2002 and take forward any justified initiatives by mid 2003	Commitment of voluntary sector; staff time
N. Develop partnership work with Education Special Needs Transport, Social Services and health authorities (Recos 27,28,31)	Work with Social Services to resolve funding overlap; work with health authorities and Social Services/ SEN to pursue integration opportunities	Significant initial time and some ongoing work	£0	N1. Resolve the Social Services funding overlap by summer 2002. N2. Conclude discussions with health authorities on split of responsibility by autumn 2002 N3. Introduce trial service if health authority discussions are successful; monitor within a year of start and, if justified, apply same approach countywide N4. Ensure that the other defined opportunities for integration are explored fully before summer 2003. Monitor progress at that date and set new targets accordingly	Commitment of health authorities and other partners; staff time
O. Increase the availability of raised kerbs (Reco 29)	Produce database, produce priority list, secure funds, implement and monitor	Some	£0 (But there will be capital spend)	O1. Carry out preparatory work and arrange initial funding in capital programme for 2002/03 O2. Detail the programme and complete first year's works O3. Assess success and prepare 2003/04 programme accordingly	Ability of Dept to carry out capital programme
P. Resolve accessible transport provision in Central Leicestershire (Reco 32)	Input to City's review, assess results, decide appropriate solution for County area, plan and introduce transport	Some	£0	P1. Input effectively to remaining stages of City Council's review, to their timescale P2. Assess and decide whether this is an appropriate solution for the County part of Central Leicestershire, within 2 months of conclusion of analysis P3. Introduce new or revised services within 6 months of decision	Timescale risk from waiting on City Council's review

Q. Work in partnership with the districts to improve the usefulness of taxis and private hire cars ( <i>Reco 34</i> )	Set up working group, explore options, prepare action plan, implement, monitor	Significant time needed to drive work forward	£0	Q1. Set up working group by end 2002. Q2. Have an action plan ready by summer 2003	Commitment of the district councils; difficulty of influencing the taxi trade
R. Investigate a more generous travel concession for disabled people ( <i>Reco 35</i> )	Implement the scheme already agreed; monitor effectiveness thereafter	Some	£0 (Funded under concessionary travel budget)	R1. Introduce the new concession from April 2002 R2. By end 2003, review with stakeholders the effectiveness of the concession compared to alternatives	None - risk of overspend is issue for separately funded service
S. Improve service administration ( <i>Recos 37,41</i> )	Improve management info systems; resolve future of Leicester trading agreements	Some	£0	S1. Resolve problems with Leicester trading agreement by May 2002 and make any necessary changes (Other issues covered under other targets)	None
T. Explore scope for further change in way service is managed ( <i>Recos 38,39</i> )	Input appropriately to highways network review; keep in touch with national picture on transport integration	-	£0	T1. Ensure effective input to Highway Services review on the issue of externalisation T2. Keep in touch with national developments on transport integration pending review	None
U. Improve monitoring, target setting and benchmarking ( <i>Reco 40</i> )	Continue regional and national benchmarking work, adopt good practice locally and increase range of performance indicators and	Some, particularly for developing and using new performance indicators	£0	U1. Carry out 6-monthly reviews, starting at March 2002, to assess known best practice and ensure this is incorporated where appropriate into local practice U2. In the same reviews, check that local indicators are being properly prepared using the most cost-effective means	Lack of national progress in benchmarking; lack of management information systems

	targets, develop required management info support systems				
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## **Section 3 – Actions necessary for implementation**

### **A. Introduce bus and community transport services to meet the requirements of the new policy**

#### 3.1 We need to:

- Prepare a detailed project plan
- Plan, consult on, invite tenders for and introduce the new main services across the county, probably on an area by area basis, working also with adjacent councils to ensure proper provision of cross-boundary services
- In parallel, work with the more rural communities to secure new and replacement services which best fit their needs, at the same time developing a system of resource allocation across the county which will guarantee each community an appropriate share of the total
- Work with schools to develop or introduce 'schools special' services in conjunction with School Travel Plans
- Plan, consult on and introduce appropriate new bus shelters and other infrastructure to support the new services and make interchange easier
- Ensure effective information and promotion for the new services
- Set in place a strategy for the further development of the services in order to drive up patronage and hence reduce the call for longer term subsidy, including further promotion and improvements to ticketing
- Set in place detailed targets and monitoring arrangements, including targets for patronage growth, modal shift, financial performance and quality.
- From these, set out a longer-term strategy for continuous improvement.

3.2 Work on implementing the 'cross-county' network for the Rural Bus Challenge project is already going ahead. In implementing the hourly services network it will be best to build on that so that an integrated approach is taken to the introduction of new services countywide.

3.3 Work on introducing the main network of hourly services will require close consultation with local communities, particularly in areas where communities look to a series of different centres for access. In the deep rural areas, service planning will derive entirely from the process of consultation, with Rural Transport Partnership staff working in the community. No existing services should be withdrawn until the replacement local services are ready for introduction.

## **B. Establish a new process of annual review of bus service performance**

3.4 We need to:

- Detail the annual process and timescale, appropriately timed to fit into the Council's budget process.
- Define the requirements for the new value for money measures to be produced
- Set up the appropriate management information systems to ensure that the necessary information for review is readily available without excessive demands on staff time
- Allocate specific responsibilities for conducting the review

## **C. Work to improve the effectiveness of Quality Bus Partnerships and hence improve the quality and scope of commercially run bus services**

3.5 We need to:

- Derive a template formal agreement for use with QBP projects, to include inputs and target outcomes, and ensure it is used in all future projects
- Derive a template for monitoring QBP projects, set up management information systems to ensure that the necessary support information is readily available, and ensure that this is incorporated into all future projects
- Ensure that all future QBP projects are assessed against good practice in the provision of bus priorities and interchange facilities
- Set up arrangements for a more general review of the effectiveness of current QBP projects once the improved monitoring arrangements have been in place for some while

## **D. Improve passenger feedback on bus service standards**

3.6 We need to:

- Review the effectiveness of the previous Bus Users' Panel
- Assess good practice elsewhere
- Draw up proposals and consult on those with stakeholders, ensuring that the approach is consistent with the national BVPI
- Introduce the new system

## **E. Lobby the government to strengthen the work of the Traffic Commissioners**

3.7 We need to:

- Assess whether lobbying can best be done directly or via the Local Government Association or other agency

- Prepare evidence
- Make approaches to government and to local members of parliament
- If no progress is made, take appropriate opportunities to repeat lobbying in the future

## **F. Work to improve the quality of contract bus services**

3.8 We need to produce a tighter definition of required quality standards at the pre-tender stage by:

- Selecting from good practice elsewhere
- Setting out proposals
- Consulting with the bus companies
- Introducing, if necessary on a trial basis first

3.9 We need to test more rigorously whether operators can meet the prescribed quality standards before awarding a contract by:

- Selecting from good practice elsewhere
- Setting out a test system which will fairly assess an operator's competence, perhaps using a 'two envelope' system
- Consulting with the bus companies
- Introducing, if necessary on a trial basis first

3.10 We need to develop the inspection and enforcement system to focus increasingly on helping operators to drive up their own standards by:

- Increasing administrative support in this area so that a higher proportion of reported defects is followed up
- Using this, and the inspection regime, to ensure that efforts can be targeted more clearly on those companies which are overall offering the lowest standards
- Allocate a higher proportion of available staff time to working with those companies, where possible giving advice on the means of better controlling service and vehicle quality;
- Where a company shows itself incapable of improving, ensuring that it is removed from council contract work

3.11 We need to produce more sophisticated ways of assessing customer satisfaction with quality so that we can better measure performance and determine targets. We will do this by:

- Setting out new attitude-measuring techniques and testing them on a sample basis
- On the basis of this, planning and introducing an appropriate programme, ensuring that it is properly resourced
- Setting customer satisfaction targets on the basis of the results of the first round of surveys

## **G. Improve the competitiveness of bus supply by improving interaction with the market**

3.12 We need to improve our interaction with the market by:

- Setting up the revised systems for handling the tendering process
- Establishing and running a more formal operator forum
- Improving management information systems so that we can better monitor the changing state of the market, particularly with regard to trends in contract prices for different vehicle types and volume of bids for tenders in different parts of the county
- Taking specific steps to promote an improved supply market for taxis and small minibuses
- Taking specific steps to encourage the expansion of voluntary sector transport schemes into this work (see L)

## **H. Improve the competitiveness of bus supply by testing the case for purchasing vehicles and by keeping the case for in-house operation under review**

3.13 We need to keep the case for operating vehicles in-house under review by

- Following up any new initiatives in this field elsewhere
- Conducting a more formal re-assessment at an appropriate future date

3.14 We need to test the option of buying vehicles and placing them with the contractor, for both full sized vehicles and small minibuses, by:

- Completing analysis work already started on the potential use of capital funds to increase the availability of full-sized low-floor buses on contract services
- If appropriate, moving forward to a trial
- On the basis of that trial, deciding whether to extend the approach
- Assessing practice elsewhere in buying small minibuses and placing them with operators to help develop the market for such vehicles
- Analysing the potential for application in Leicestershire
- If appropriate, carrying out on a trial basis
- On the basis of that trial, deciding whether to extend the approach
- In any case, maintaining an up-to-date comparison database for potential future use

## **I. Draw up and implement a bus information strategy**

3.15 We need to:

- On the basis of work done in the review, and further analysis of recent practice elsewhere, set out proposals for a strategy.
- Ensure that the draft strategy contains specific measures to control quality and ensure comprehensive and timely updating of information
- Consult bus users and the bus companies on the draft strategy
- Draw up with bus company partners an implementation plan, ensuring that the necessary monitoring and management information measures are put in place
- Implement in a phased programme

## **J. Ensure that work on the development of the Leicestershire rail network is progressed**

3.16 To secure the transfer of responsibility for funding of the Ivanhoe Stage 1 service to the Strategic Rail Authority, we need to:

- Maintain regular contact with the SRA over the coming year
- Be prepared to take other steps, for example by lobbying government, if that should prove necessary

3.17 To progress the development of new local rail stations in the county we need to:

- Update work on the case for the stations and the likely patronage from them
- Prepare the case to be put to the SRA when they recommence the franchising process for Central Trains
- Maintain dialogue with Midland Mainline on the potential for Kibworth station and react appropriately to any new opportunities emerging

3.18 To review rail station interchange we need to:

- Prioritise stations in the county to identify those with most potential
- Agree objectives with the partners: rail operators, bus operators and district councils
- Assess infrastructure requirements and how they will be funded and delivered
- Assess implications for bus service provision
- Programme the justifiable improvements



3.19 To lobby for service and station improvement on the basis of Local Transport Plan priorities we need to maintain close contacts with the train operating companies and the SRA, and particularly to prepare and make an effective case at the time the Central Trains franchise comes up for renewal

**K. Take steps to improve the quality and competitiveness of the Ivanhoe Stage 1 rail service**

3.20 To improve quality monitoring and follow up specific defects we need to:

- Collate existing information on punctuality and reliability on an ongoing basis
- Increase the frequency of station inspections to bi-monthly
- Ensure that quarterly on-train surveys are used to collect information on customer perceptions of quality
- Ensure repeated follow-up to Central Trains on reported defects

3.21 To increase patronage and revenue we need to:

- Prepare a new promotions plan, based on good practice elsewhere and pitched at a level commensurate with the likely returns
- Implement that in a phased programme through to April 2003.

**L. Expand accessible transport to give countywide coverage**

3.22 We need to:

- Analyse in more detail the areas of the county currently unserved and how service could best be extended to them
- Discuss with voluntary sector partners the best way of extending their services, covering issues such as recruiting more volunteers and removing the current provision which makes scheme users pay for the 'home to pick-up' mileage of volunteer drivers
- In parallel, assess the scope in specific cases for providing this transport using the spare time in Social Services or S.E.N. transport minibuses
- On the basis of the above, prepare an implementation plan including targets
- Work with the partners to carry it out
- Monitor the achievement of the plan

## **M. Work with voluntary schemes to improve service competitiveness and quality**

3.23 To improve customer feedback we need to:

- Devise a comment system, perhaps based on comment cards, ensuring measurable feedback is available for each scheme and to the County Council as scheme funders
- Consult service providers and users on this
- Introduce the system
- Monitor and adjust as necessary

3.24 To investigate more cost-effective booking systems for voluntary sector schemes we need to:

- Assess the potential for savings and better service to customers by operating integrated bookings services, perhaps on a district basis
- If there is a case for taking this further, discuss options with service providers
- Progress any justifiable initiatives

## **N. Develop partnership work with Education Special Needs Transport, Social Services and health authorities**

3.25 To resolve the current overlap in scheme funding between Social Services and Planning and Transportation we need to:

- Establish with Social Services and the voluntary organisations the exact extent to which Social Services core funding is used to support voluntary transport schemes
- Re-direct that funding to the schemes via the Planning and Transportation service level agreements

3.26 To resolve the current uncertainties over the boundary between health authority and County Council funding for transport to health facilities, and explore the opportunities for integrated supply, we need to:

- Re-engage the interest of the health authorities at a senior level
- Agree a definition of the responsibilities of the two agencies, for testing
- Work with the partners to set up and carry through a trial, testing both the integrated supply of transport through a single voluntary transport scheme and the correct definition of funding responsibilities
- Monitor this, using appropriate targets and performance indicators
- Plan a future programme for extending this approach, if successful, countywide

3.27 To test the potential for further integration with Social Services and Special Education Transport we need to:

- Use the trial proposed above to test integrated transport provision for health authority, social services and planning and transportation clients within a single voluntary scheme organisation
- Seek an opportunity in the expansion of accessible transport to countywide coverage to test the use of a SEN or Social Services minibus to provide a service for mobility-impaired passengers at a time when it is not being used for its main activities. (See L)
- Subject to finding such an opportunity, introduce such a service, monitor it and, depending on success, consider using the approach also elsewhere in the county

**O. Increase the availability of raised kerbs at bus stops to make low-floor buses fully accessible**

3.28 Investment through QBP projects and the Rural Bus Challenge project will help to increase the availability of raised kerbs. To accelerate this process we need to:

- Produce plans showing where and when low-floor bus services are being introduced across the county, and keep these up to date
- Produce a priority list for extending the availability of raised kerbs on those routes, over and above the work already being programmed through QBP projects and Rural Bus Challenge
- Assess the availability of LTP funds to pay for such a programme
- Carry out the programme, monitor and feed back into programme planning for future years

**P. Resolve accessible transport provision in Central Leicestershire**

3.29 We need to:

- Continue to input appropriately to the City Council's Best Value review of this service area, through to a conclusion
- Assess the results and decide whether the proposed service provides the Best Value solution for providing accessible transport in the county part of Central Leicestershire
- If so, negotiate an appropriate agreement
- If not, plan and implement alternative means of transport provision

**Q. Work in partnership with the district councils to improve the usefulness of taxis and private hire cars for mobility-impaired passengers**

3.30 We need to:

- Set up a working group with appropriate officers of the district councils
- Through that group, explore the prospects for securing a mixed fleet of types of taxis and private hire cars, and for ensuring drivers have appropriate disability awareness training
- Take forward initiatives arising from the work of this group, providing appropriate information to potential service users and setting appropriate targets
- Monitor the progress of initiatives

**R. Investigate the possibility of offering a more generous travel concession for disabled people to use when travelling by taxi**

3.31 We need to implement the agreed concessionary travel scheme for 2002/03 onwards, which contains a 50% increase in the value of travel tokens offered to disabled people. Thereafter we need to monitor periodically the effectiveness of the concession in helping disabled people to meet access needs.

**S. Improve service administration**

3.32 To improve effectiveness we need to improve our management information in the areas of customer numbers and customer views, financial performance of services and service quality. This action links across to a number of the other service-specific action points.

3.33 To resolve the future of the trading agreement with Leicester City Council we need to:

- Monitor for a further period the demands on staff time produced by the agreement and the impact of that on county work
- Assess whether increased staffing at the City Council has brought the problem under control
- If not, negotiate an appropriate adjustment to the agreement, perhaps by redefining the scope of work to be carried out under it

**T. Explore further the scope for further change in the way the service is managed**

3.34 To test fully the scope for externalisation we need to await the conclusions of the Best Value Review of Highway Services, which will consider this issue across the whole transportation function.

3.35 The greater integration of transport procurement and provision across the authority is to be considered in a separate review. A Member decision is required as to whether, as the Panel recommends, work on this issue can be brought forward.

#### **U. Improve monitoring, target setting and benchmarking**

3.36 To improve our performance in this area we need to:

- Continue work in regional and national Best Value groups in the profession to help develop best practice
- Adopt such practice locally
- Continue to develop management information systems which will allow the consistent production of monitoring information in a way which is not unduly labour-intensive
- Through the annual Service Plan, develop a wider range of useful performance indicators and targets

### **Section 4 - Providing appropriate staff resources**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The Public Transport Group is currently staffed to a level appropriate for managing the existing services and for coping with most imposed changes in the commercial bus services network. It does this for both the County and City Councils. Implementing review recommendations will require extra input over a period of around three years. There may also be a greater long-term staffing requirement in order to sustain the required levels of output.

4.1.2 The overall programme of implementation will be managed by a team led by the Public Transport Co-ordinator. This team will control the activities of the four project teams (see below) and of those engaged in carrying through the other activities. The team will have a regular programme of meetings throughout the implementation period and will be particularly concerned that there is effective monitoring and that action is taken appropriately in the face of any contingencies.

4.1.3 Section 4.2 assesses the staffing requirements for the actions detailed in Section 3. Section 4.3 sets out how these extra requirements are to be met.

#### **4.2 Staffing requirements for implementing the review recommendations**

4.2.1 The requirements are set out in the table in Section 2. No entry is made in the table for any action where the staff time requirement is marginal. It is difficult to estimate in advance the actual amount of time required but the quantification in the table ranges from 'some' through 'significant' to 'substantial'.

### **4.3 Providing the staff resources**

4.3.1 Some marginal extra work can be carried out by existing staff but within limits: more than a marginal additional workload will threaten service quality. Beyond this, during the three year implementation period further extra work can be carried out by consultants or temporary staff. The choice between them depends on the nature of the work, the mix of skills required to carry it out, and the likely ease of recruiting staff direct. In the longer term, substantial extra work would require the recruitment of more staff.

4.3.2 We have identified five main projects in the transitional stage. Each will be led by a project team drawn from officers of the Public Transport Group, with outside involvement if appropriate. They will be:

- Project 1 - Creating the new bus services network. This will be integrated with the project team already formed to take forward the 'Cross-county' Rural Bus Challenge project.
- Project 2 - Establishing new management information systems. This will provide support for many of the actions. It is wider than just an I.T. project although support from the I.S.U. will be required.
- Project 3 - Preparing a bus information strategy. We believe this can best be delivered by hiring a consultancy, to act under instructions from the officer steering group.
- Project 4 - Improving contract bus service quality. This will be taken forward by a group led by the appropriate team leader
- Project 5 - Providing countywide coverage of accessible transport and developing accessible transport partnerships with other agencies. This depends on close working relationships with the schemes and is therefore best led by the permanent team leader, who will form a project team with the groups.

4.3.3 It is clear that extra staff time will be necessary to support these projects, but it is not possible to be certain of the exact volume of work involved in each. Also, recent changes in staff within the Public Transport Group make it uncertain exactly what baseload of work existing staff can handle. For these reasons we propose:

- The provision of a sum of £30,000 for each of the next three years, sufficient to employ a member of staff to be used flexibly as progress with implementation requires
- The use of Countryside Agency funding to support a further worker to progress the accessible transport initiatives; the Council would be required to contribute 25% of the person's salary costs, to be taken from the £30,000 above.
- The employment of consultants, at an estimated cost of £15,000, to prepare and consult on the Bus Information Strategy.

4.3.4 All the other implementation actions should be manageable within existing staff resources. A caveat is that the currently buoyant jobs

market has resulted in high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting into the group. Any prolonged period with vacancies in the group could threaten delivery. There will need to be a contingency for short-period recruitment of consultants or agency staff if such is necessary to maintain momentum.

- 4.3.5 The long term staffing requirement is much less clear. Generally, although we can predict future workloads within limits, we cannot yet do so sufficiently accurately to allow a clear view of future staffing requirements. We therefore propose reviewing the situation in late 2002 or early 2003 to assess whether the present staffing level is appropriate for the long term.
- 4.3.6 In one area we believe extra support is needed immediately and for the long term. This is for 'F' on the quality of contract bus services. It is clear that existing staff resources do not allow proper administrative support for an effective inspection and enforcement system. We therefore propose the recruitment of an admin support officer. The post can be provided by recruiting to a funded vacancy in the concessionary travel team which will no longer be required following the simplification of the concessionary travel scheme from 2002/03.

**Section 5 - Funding**

5.1 The table in Section 2 sets out the funding requirements of the actions set out in Section 3. It shows additional or reduced revenue funding over and above sums in existing County Council budgets and sums committed from external sources (e.g. Rural Bus Challenge). Where there are clearly no funding implications, or the cost is marginal, there is no entry in the table. The total requirement, including an extra £45,000 for staffing in 2002/03 and £30,000 in each of the two following years, is as follows:

	<i>2002/03</i>	<i>2003/04</i>	<i>Thereafter</i>
Extra funding needed:	£80,000	-£75,000	£15,000

5.2 The low figures for 2003/04 are explained by the £255,000 a year anticipated saving from the SRA taking over funding of the Ivanhoe Line Stage 1. If it proves not possible to provide the necessary sum for 2002/03 in this year's budget process, the implementation targets will have to be set back somewhat.

5.3 The following notes explain the entries in the table in Section 2.

A	Rural Bus Challenge is lost after 2003/04, though further bids can be made to support development. Sustaining the network thereafter may depend on the ability to attract extra passengers and so reduce the total subsidy requirement. There is a considerable contingency risk, through further above-inflation increases in the market price and any further deregistration of commercial services. This is considered in Section 9.
F	Cost set out is mainly for work on assessing customer satisfaction and the mechanics of improved tendering. Work on driving up quality standards may marginally affect tender prices, but we assume this will not be significant against the current trend of sharply rising prices
G H	We hope for savings from this work but have not assumed any
I	The final report proposes an increase in expenditure of £40,000 a year. The phasing assumes the strategy will be in place by late 2002
J	We assume, on the basis of discussions to date with the SRA, that they will take over responsibility for the Ivanhoe Line subsidy from April 2003. Station interchange work may require some capital investment, which has already been flagged up in the LTP
K	We hope for improved net revenue from this work but have not assumed any
L	Extending to produce countywide coverage will take the best part of 3 years
N	We believe the development of this work is likely to produce returns only to a longer time period, hence no savings are shown
O	There are only marginal revenue implications but extra capital spending will be required. Such a programme is consistent with LTP objectives and there should therefore be no difficulty in allocating some funds.
P	In the absence of other information from the City Council's review we assume it will be cost-neutral
R	This change is incorporated in changes to the concessionary travel scheme proposed for introduction in April 2002. It is budgeted separately and is in any case outweighed by savings from increased district council funding for the scheme

#### 5.4 In conclusion:

- The additional funding requirement is modest, particularly if the Council is successful in securing the transfer of funding responsibility for the Ivanhoe Line Stage 1 service to the SRA in 2003/04.
- In a parallel move, the Council will save up to £0.9m a year from increased district council contributions to a countywide concessionary travel scheme. Some of those savings depend directly on having in place a more comprehensive network of rural bus services.
- There is, however, a substantial medium term risk in the provision of the bus services network, because of the changing market price and the risk of further withdrawal of commercially run bus services.



## **Section 6 - Communicating the plan to stakeholders and securing their commitment**

6.1 There will be a series of discussions with stakeholders as we come to implement each action in the plan. Within the total there are some key stakeholder commitment issues. These, and how we will deal with them, are detailed in the following table.

<i>Action and issue</i>	<i>How we will deal with it</i>
A. Securing bus company commitment to working in partnership on the countywide network	Ensure their close involvement and commitment through a project steering group which includes them as key members
C. Securing bus company commitment to the more analytical approach to QBP initiatives	Providing effective Council input to the analysis and continuing to promote through existing QBP mechanisms
F. Securing bus company commitment to the new approach to contract service quality	The approach will only work if bus companies are signed up to the principles. This requires effective consultation when we draw up detailed proposals, plus continuing feedback thereafter
I. Securing bus company commitment to the partnership approach necessary for an effective bus information strategy	Ensure close involvement of the main bus companies in drawing up the strategy, plus joint working with Leicester City Council. Set up mechanism to ensure effective joint monitoring of the strategy once it is in place
L. Ensure voluntary sector transport providers are fully committed and equipped to expand accessible transport coverage countywide	Establish clear principles and approach, through consultation, at an early stage. Maintain voluntary sector involvement through project steering group. Provide appropriate support for individual schemes expanding
N. Secure commitment of health authorities to a more clear definition of funding responsibility for transport to medical facilities	Try to build commitment through ongoing exploratory discussions. If these do not produce results, review scope for different type of approach to the health authorities
Q. Secure commitment of the district councils to giving sufficient priority to the issue of taxi use by disabled people	Provide clear guidance on the issues and work through a group of district officers to make progress

6.2 There will also be a requirement for detailed customer consultation as the review recommendations are implemented. This applies to many areas, but particularly where bus services are to be altered as part of the establishment of the new networks and where new services are to be developed in the most rural areas. In the former case consultation will

generally be in writing via bus passengers, parish councils and local County Council Members, though in some parts of the County it may be possible to establish local consultative groups like that already working successfully in the Vale of Belvoir. In the latter case, the rural transport staff will be holding discussions with interested members of each community, particularly including present users of services.

- 6.3 The final stage of communication is to publicise the new services on offer. In each case effective promotion will be part of the detailed implementation work.

## **Section 7 - Improvements to support systems**

7.1 This has already been noted as 'project 2' in Section 4. We intend to:

- Define accurately the scope of the improved support systems we require
- Examine the scope for integration between systems within and without the public transport group, particularly bus service databases and financial monitoring
- Allocate substantial staff time to developing the new systems
- Bid for appropriate I.S.U. resources to help develop new software support
- Ensure formal procedures for the use of the new systems are put in place
- Monitor success and take any necessary corrective action.

## **Section 8 - Timescales and targets**

- 8.1 Based on the analysis above, we intend to implement the review findings to meet the timescale and targets set out in the summary table in Section 2. More detailed timetable targets will be set within the project plans for the more complex initiatives.
- 8.2 There are no targets relating our performance to that of the top 25% of authorities. This is because there is as yet no objective basis for comparison. One of the objectives of our continuing work on benchmarking will be to help ensure that such a national framework of comparison is developed.
- 8.3 The targets set out in this table are those for the initial implementation of the review. Monitoring will result in the establishment of further targets for future years. These will be detailed and monitored through the service planning process. Many of the initial targets are outputs rather than outcomes: establishing baseline figures for measures such as customer satisfaction will allow trends to be assessed and targets set for outcomes.

## **Section 9 - Monitoring and Contingencies**

- 9.1 We will monitor the implementation of the review through the work of a Steering Group, chaired by the Public Transport Co-ordinator and including officers internal and external to the Public Transport Group. The group will meet quarterly in any case and more often if required. At each meeting, progress against targets will be assessed and corrective action planned if necessary.
- 9.2 The Steering Group will report upwards to the management team of the Planning and Transportation Department and to the Cabinet Lead Members for the Environment. This will be done annually, but immediately if particular problems arise. Cabinet Lead Members may request a report on to the Cabinet.
- 9.3 The Steering Group will, as part of its work, assess at each meeting the current risk from contingencies. Potential contingencies are considered earlier in this Plan. The three largest are increases in cost, not securing the full co-operation of the bus companies, and inadequate staff resource.
- 9.4 *Increasing cost.* This is a significant risk, particularly with the current state of the bus industry. We will control this risk by:
- producing monthly forecasts of expenditure as implementation moves forward,
  - keeping under review all available means of controlling increases in costs,
  - ensuring that any significant variations are flagged up as soon as they are apparent, to allow Member decision whether as part of the budget process or at other times of the year.
- 9.5 *Lack of bus company commitment.* We will minimise this risk by:
- Ensuring the bus companies are closely involved in the planning and execution of relevant parts of the strategy
  - Recognising the commercial environment in which they work and ensuring that their required inputs are judged accordingly
  - Working with them to help overcome external constraints such as those imposed by the Office of Fair Trading
- 9.6 *Inadequate staff resources.* With the present difficulties in recruitment this is also a significant risk. We will minimise it by putting some of the additional work of implementation with consultants and using flexible working arrangements within the Public Transport Group staff to ensure available staff members can work where the priority is highest.

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

**New Bus Policy**

1. That, subject to further consultation to test the acceptability of the approach, the proposals for a new bus support policy set out in the report be approved for inclusion in the improvement plan, to be introduced through a phased introduction approach. The improvement plan will need to include provision for detailed local consultation on individual services as part of the phased introduction programme.
2. That in order to ration limited funds a target be set for the percentage of Leicestershire people who are provided access through each service type then a vfm measure be used to buy in services to move as close as possible to that target.
3. That the value for money measure to be used as the main determinant in deciding on which service to provide be 'the population served per £ subsidy'. That the 'subsidy per passenger journey' criterion be used as the day to day management tool for monitoring the performance of contract services and taking action where necessary.
4. That a process of annual review be used to ensure that services are adjusted to meet changes in demand and in the commercial services network and to ensure that expenditure stays within available funding without ad-hoc decision making.

**Bus Service Quality**

5. That the Council should continue work to improve the effectiveness of Quality Bus Partnerships through a variety of detailed measures, including a more innovative approach to bus priorities, more attention to bus terminals and interchange and clear formal agreements between the partners for every QBP initiative, covering inputs and target outcomes.
6. That an improved monitoring system be introduced so that a more sound assessment of the impact of specific initiatives can be made. Only after this is in place will it be possible to reach a more soundly-based judgement as to the future level of investment in QBPs.
7. That the Council further develop its general role in providing feedback to bus companies on customer views and investing in complementary measures both within and without QBP areas.

8. That whilst the Council can hope to improve the scope and quality of commercially-run bus services by the above means, it be noted that the fundamental limitations, through the lack of any statutory powers, will remain.
9. That the improvement plan should confirm the development of partnership working through such schemes as the Rural Bus Challenge project and the development of improved bus terminals and interchanges. The plan should show how ways of improving the Council's role in helping to provide feedback to bus companies on customer views of their services will be considered.
10. That the following specific steps be taken to improve quality:
  - Lobbying the Government to strengthen the work of the Traffic Commissioners;
  - For contract services, producing a tighter definition of quality requirements at the service specification stage, pre-tender;
  - Taking more rigorous steps before a contract is awarded to ensure that tenderers can meet the required quality standards, perhaps with the help of a 'two envelope' system of tendering;
  - Developing the newly-enhanced inspection and enforcement regime to focus increasingly on helping bus operators to drive up their own standards; and
  - Producing more sophisticated ways of measuring customer satisfaction with quality so that the authority can better measure performance and determine targets.

### **Bus Supply**

11. That the approach in Section 4.7.4 to improving interaction with the market be supported and that, in view of the fact that market conditions can change quickly, this area be kept under regular review.
12. That the case for in-house operation of vehicles has not been justified but that the situation be kept under regular review in case the market rate overtakes the in-house rate.
13. That the option of buying vehicles and placing these with the contractor be tested in more detail, by analysing experience from elsewhere and looking for a possible test case in the county. This work should be linked with other work in developing competition in the relatively new markets of taxi and small minibus operation of public transport services.

14. That the improvement plan demonstrate how the authority will:
- Take a series of steps to improve our interaction with the market, as outlined in Section 4.7.4.
  - Improve the numbers-based monitoring of market conditions and regularly review the approach to the market
  - Explore the option of buying vehicles to be placed with contract operators, and keep the possible operation of in-house vehicles under review
  - Communicate with and develop the supply market for taxis and small minibuses
  - Develop mechanisms for helping the expansion of voluntary-sector operation of public transport services

### **Bus Information**

15. That subject to further consultation:-
- A Bus Information Strategy be produced on the basis that information is produced in partnership, with the Council funding information for revenue-risk contract bus services but not for commercial bus services.
  - The proposed main elements of the strategy be telephone and internet services, roadside displays, timetable leaflets and booklets, a Central Leicestershire map guide, and continued development of the Star-trak real-time information system.
  - The improvement plan should set out how this is to be carried forward through consultation to implementation over the year following approval of the plan.
16. That controlling the cost of bus passenger information requires a continuation of the present 'good housekeeping' approach, with market testing where appropriate, rather than any radically different approach.
17. That in setting out proposals for taking forward the preparation and consultation for the Bus Information Strategy, the improvement plan demonstrate how appropriate quality controls can be built in.

### **Rail**

18. That steps be taken to ensure that support for the Ivanhoe Stage 1 rail service is passed to the Strategic Rail Authority.
19. That work continue with the SRA/Railtrack and train operating companies to introduce possible new stations as circumstances permit.
20. That a review of rail station interchange be completed and justifiable proposals for improvement taken forward.

21. That lobbying for improved services and station improvements be continued.
22. That existing monitoring of quality for the Ivanhoe Stage 1 Rail service be enhanced to provide more continuous feedback.
23. That specific action be taken with regard to unreliability of one train and the problem of station announcements both on the Ivanhoe Stage 1 Rail service.
24. That it be noted that there is currently no means of gaining an alternative supplier for the Ivanhoe Stage 1 service and that cost-competitiveness is largely determined by the national framework.
25. That a new promotion plan for the service be drawn up and implemented with targets for increased patronage.

### **Accessible Transport**

26. That the service, in partnership with mainly voluntary sector providers, be expanded to give effective countywide coverage, over perhaps a three-year period, incorporating new policies on the allocation of resources.
27. That the current overlap in funding between Social Services and Planning and Transportation Departments be resolved so as to gain the maximum benefit from Council funding overall.
28. That the current discussions with the health authorities be taken forward to a conclusion which clearly resolves the boundary of responsibility for funding transport to health facilities.
29. That the currently enhanced funding through the Local Transport Plan process be used to produce accelerated introduction of raised kerbs, to make low-floor buses of more value to wheelchair users and others.
30. That initiatives be taken to make it easier for customers to comment on voluntary sector services.
31. That the potential integration of service supply with health authorities and social services should be explored further.
32. That the current City Council review of the Access and Dial-a-ride services be used, if appropriate, to help influence the type of future service provision in Central Leicestershire.
33. That the service option of using spare time/capacity in Special Education and Social Services minibuses be properly tested.

34. That partnerships with district councils be progressed, to try to improve the usefulness of taxis and private hire cars for mobility-impaired customers, particularly in respect of obtaining a mixed fleet of vehicles and improving drivers' customer care skills.
35. That the possibility of offering a more generous travel concession, for disabled people to use when travelling by taxi, be fully investigated.
36. That a more cost-effective booking system for voluntary sector schemes should be investigated, possibly resulting in a more centralised system.

### **Service Management and Administration**

37. That action be taken to improve service administration in the areas set out in section 7.3.2
38. That the scope for externalisation of public transport management/ administration be considered again following any approach to the market that might be carried out as part of the current Best Value Review of Highway Services.
39. That there is a prima facie case for greater integration of transport procurement/provision across the authority and that work on this issue be brought forward if possible.
40. That performance in monitoring and target setting be improved, using improved management information systems including the development of comparative benchmarking information.
41. That the trading agreements with Leicester City Council be continued subject to further discussions to resolve the issue of increased calls on County Council staff time.