PROPOSED PASSENGER TRANSPORT POLICY AND STRATEGY
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1) What is the statutory duty on Leicestershire County Council to provide Public Transport?

The operation of local bus services in Leicestershire is the responsibility of commercial/private bus operators. This has been the case since local bus service operation was opened to the commercial market by the Transport Act 1985 making bus service operation a profit-driven business.

Whilst the provision of public transport is not a public service, Section 63(1)(a) of the Transport Act 1985 explains that local authorities must "secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council considers it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose".

However, when deciding what is "appropriate" the council is within its rights under the act to take into account the funds that are available. This means that there isn't a specific requirement that the council must subsidise bus services.

2) The title of the consultation document says 'Have your say on proposed changes to how we support passenger transport services in Leicestershire'; what is meant by the term 'support'?

This is referencing the financial 'support' that the County Council provides towards passenger transport services. This maybe in the form of full or partial subsidy of bus services, Demand Responsive Transport solutions and Community Transport etc.

Where reference is made to supporting commercial operators within the consultation document, this means working with them to ensure things like bus stop infrastructure and service information are provided and maintained and helping to ensure that buses are not held up by congestion etc. This support does not require council subsidy.

3) Is this new Public Transport Policy and Strategy just about saving money?

No, the proposed PTPS sets out how the County Council would go about meeting its statutory duties and deliver value for money passenger transport services for Leicestershire. The PTPS will ensure fit for purpose passenger transport solutions are provided that best meet essential need and fulfil statutory requirements. It aims to make the best use of the council's limited funding resource for socially necessary passenger transport provision.

4) How much does a bus service cost to run?

The typical running cost of 1 bus is circa £125,000 to £150,000. This includes the cost of the bus, driver's salary, maintenance, mileage, insurance etc. This cost is before any fare revenue is taken into account. It should be noted that the longer the routeing for the service and/or higher its frequency then more than 1 bus would be required to run the service.

5) When will the PTPS be implemented and any changes as a result of it come into force?

The consultation exercise on the new passenger transport policy and strategy (PTPS) will take place between 21st March and 13th June 2018.

If the passenger transport policy and strategy are agreed, the council would start a rolling programme of reviewing all current subsidised bus services against the agreed policy and strategy. Where a bus service is not considered to provide good value, the council would consult locally on potential alternative services. Subject to the agreement of the County Council's Cabinet to adopt and to implement a new PTPS, changes to passenger transport provision as a result of these reviews would not come into effect until the summer of 2019 at the earliest.'

6) If a local bus service is withdrawn from an area does this mean that there will no passenger transport provision for that area at all?

No, not necessarily; where a service is withdrawn or where some transport needs cannot be met by the commercial market or by community transport services, the council has to consider whether it should intervene with some form of alternative provision in line with its statutory duty.

The council would therefore assess the case for need and support as detailed in the policy and strategy and decide what is appropriate to provide. In deciding what is appropriate the council would aim to ensure good use of the limited resources available by providing fit-for-purpose solutions that best meet the essential needs of Leicestershire's residents. The alternative, if considered necessary, therefore might not be the provision of a bus.

7) Why are some services contracted together and others contracted individually?

In the case where 2 services are listed together this reflects that the services were tendered as a package of work and operationally interworked to get the most efficient use of the resources and to ensure the very best contract price was achieved for the council. Whilst together the services offer the best value possible, splitting the services and contracting them individually would create inefficiencies and subsequently an increase in price. Removing one of the services and continuing with the other would result in a considerable increase in the cost

of the remaining service as it would still require a vehicle and driver for the whole day but would have more standing time in the likely case that the bus had no other work to be interworked with.

In cases where the same service appears as 2 or more separate contracts, this reflects that different parts of the service have been contracted separately with the operator. For example, the 154 Saturday service supports the whole operation for this service on a Saturday whereas the Monday to Friday service reflects one late journey which the operator would not operate commercially and the Council decided to support according to the Council's current policy. These type of arrangements are often what is called a 'de minimis' agreement whereby the bus company operates the majority of the contract on a commercial basis and the Council buy in additional journeys where it deems them necessary.

8) What are neighbouring authorities doing with respect to public transport provision?

Many local authorities across the country either have in place or are developing a scheme for prioritising how they should use their limited resources for subsidising bus services that are not commercially viable. As examples:

a) In Nottinghamshire, the County Council uses a multi-criteria scoring scheme that has some similarities with the proposed Leicestershire scoring scheme. This looks at six indicators rather than our proposed three – these are:

   i) subsidy per passenger trip
   ii) number of passengers per journey
   iii) journey purpose
   iv) car ownership levels in the communities which the service serves
   v) availability of alternative public transport provision in the communities which the service serves, and
   vi) index of multiple deprivation levels in the communities which the service serves.

b) In February of this year (2018) Northamptonshire County Council agreed its budget proposals, which include removing all bus subsidies, including CountyConnect and CallConnect, from the end of the school term in July 2018.

9) What is a Travel Plan?

A Travel Plan is a plan of action to encourage people to use sustainable travel means such as walking, cycling and bus use rather than private cars. These have significant environmental and health benefits. A Travel Plan is often required by a planning authority for a new development, to try to ensure that as many people as possible who live or work in that development use sustainable travel. It may include a range of measures that encourage or help people to make sustainable travel choices.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SCORING MECHANISMS FOR ASSESSING THE CASE FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL BUS SERVICES

10) **Why have food shopping, primary healthcare, and employment & training been identified as the highest priority journey purposes?**

Food shopping and primary healthcare journeys are seen as supporting the basic essentials for people to live and are in line with Leicestershire County Council's 'Wellbeing and Opportunity' target outcome set out in the council's new Strategic Plan. Access to employment and training is seen as a high priority as it contributes towards the council's target outcome of a 'Strong Economy'.

11) **Why have you used 'cost per passenger kilometre' as an indicator?**

Subsidy cost per person-trip is often used by local authorities as a key measure of value for money when considering bus subsidies. While useful, this ignores the fact that some trips are longer than others. Our chosen indicator is a variant which acknowledges that, for example, subsidising a route by £2 per trip where an average trip is 10km long provides better value than subsidising a route by £2 per trip where an average trip is only 1km long.

12) **Why have you used 'number of Leicestershire residents within the bus service's catchment area' as an indicator?**

This indicator reflects the value to a local community of having the option to use bus travel when needed. It looks at the number of people who would have no access to any regular bus service linking them to a local centre and who would be too far from a local centre to walk. Within this indicator, greater weighting is also given to serving communities that suffer from employment deprivation, in line with the council's 'Wellbeing and Opportunity' and 'Strong Economy' target outcomes within its overall Strategic Plan.

13) **Why have you used 800m as the distance for assessing whether people have access to another bus service or directly to a local centre?**

800m has been adopted as the maximum distance people could reasonably be expected to walk to catch a bus or to walk straight to a local centre. This is in line with industry guidance. For example, the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (2000) suggests that outside town centres, 800m is an 'acceptable' walking distance and 1200m is a 'preferred maximum'. People with mobility difficulties, for whom these distances may not be possible, may be catered for by door-to-door community transport services, which Leicestershire County Council will continue to support.

14) Why have you used 'journey purposes served' as an indicator?

This indicator helps ensure that services that can support the journey purposes that have been identified as high priority (food shopping, primary healthcare, and employment and training) score more highly, as do services that support multiple journey purposes.

15) How is each scoring indicator calculated – what data is used?

a) Net subsidy cost per passenger-km

The calculation of the net subsidy cost per passenger-km involves comparing the overall net cost of supporting a bus service with the actual or forecast usage. This is done in three stages:

i. The starting point for the **net subsidy cost** is the cost of the contract the County Council has with the bus operator to operate the service. Depending on the form of contract, this is adjusted by:

- Deduction of the amount of fare revenue (if any) coming back to the Council from the operator;
- Addition of the cost to the Council of any additional money reimbursed to the operator for carrying concessionary passholders for free; and
- Deduction of the cost of any school service that would need to be put in place to carry statutorily-entitled pupils if the bus service wasn't operating.

ii. **Passenger-km** travelled is calculated from the number of trips carried on the service multiplied by the average passenger trip length on the service. Numbers of trips are logged on the bus through the ticket machine every time someone boards, and are reported back to the Council by bus operators on a regular basis. Average trip length is determined using either data from on-bus surveys or from a default assumption that the average trip length is half the service route length (this is an assumption that is commonly used in estimating average trip length for reimbursing operators for carrying concessionary passengers, based on guidance from the Government Department for Transport).

iii. **Net subsidy cost per passenger-km** is then the result of a) divided by the result from b).

b) Number of Leicestershire residents within the bus service's catchment area who don't have access to another direct service to a local centre by other means (e.g. a commercial bus or train service stopping within 800m of their home), and who aren't within reasonable walking distance (800m) of a local centre

This indicator is determined using a computerised geographic information system (GIS) analysis on a map base from Ordnance Survey.
First, a radius of 800m is drawn on a map layer around each bus stop location used by the service under consideration. This is overlaid by a 2nd map layer that shows

the geographic location of where people live in Leicestershire – this information is drawn from the national census that takes place every 10 years. This enables the number of people living within the bus service's catchment area to be calculated. This number is then adjusted by effectively overlaying two more layers:

i. A 3rd map layer is overlaid that shows areas of employment deprivation as defined by the Government's 'indices of deprivation' data . Any people within the catchment area who also live in one of the 30% most employment-deprived areas of England an area of employment deprivation are counted double for this indicator. This reflects the emphasis on economic development and wellbeing in the County Council's new Strategic Plan.

ii. A 4th map layer is then created that shows the 800m radius catchment areas of any commercial bus service that operates near the subsidised service in question and an 800m radius area from any local centres that the subsidised bus service in question serves. The population within any overlap between these and the catchment area for the bus service in question is deducted from the total as they are seen to have alternative travel options for reaching a local centre using a commercial bus service or walking.

c) **Journey purposes served.**

The information for journey purposes served is drawn preferably from short surveys of users of the subsidised bus service in question. If that is not possible for some reason, discussions will take place with the bus operator whose drivers often get to know what passengers use the bus for at different times of day.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ALTERNATIVE PASSENGER TRANSPORT OPTIONS

16) How do Demand Responsive Transport services work?

With such services, small vehicles such as taxis or minibuses are contracted to provide a link for people who would otherwise be isolated to the nearest local centre when needed. These will operate on certain days and at certain times at fares that are much cheaper than commercial taxis, but will only run if people book them. Bookings can be made easily in advance by telephone.

Leicestershire already operates a number of DRT services that link villages without bus services to their nearest local centre, and has done for a number of years. Details of these services along with further information about DRT's can be found on our Choose How You Move web site via this link http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/everyday/public-transport/

17) What is Community Transport?

Community transport (CT) services currently provide a valuable service for people from vulnerable groups in particular (for example, disabled or older people with impaired

mobility, and people who live in isolation), helping them to access key services and activities that they can't reach using the commercial bus network. These services are provided by community organisations, with much of the work involved being undertaken on a voluntary basis.

More information about Community Transport and the services available across the County can be found on our Choose How You Move web site via this link http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/everyday/community-transport/

QUESTIONS ABOUT LOCAL COMMUNITY PASSENGER TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

18) **What are Good Neighbour Schemes?**

Good neighbour schemes are set up and run by communities to support people in need within their local area. Good neighbour schemes offer a range of services to older people to help keep them safe and continue living independently. The services offered by schemes may include befriending, home visiting, caring for pets during holiday, shopping, household tasks etc. Some schemes have their own transport elements with volunteers providing lifts to those who need them for a variety of different purposes, such as shopping and attending medical appointments. Many schemes are run at a parish level and are managed by a small group of volunteer coordinators.
Good neighbour schemes have been set up in several locations with support provided by Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland). Examples of these Good Neighbour Schemes which contain a transport element include:
- Bottesford;
- Croft;
- Sharnford; and
- Whissendine.

19) **What are car share schemes?**

There are a number of service providers offering car sharing services which connect people wishing to travel with people who are already travelling and have a spare seat in their car. These car-sharing schemes include Liftshare, BlaBlaCar and GoCarShare. Some providers offer systems to set up and operate car-sharing schemes within a defined area (e.g. Liftshare).
These schemes involve people registering on a computer database to become members of the scheme, stating their journey and whether they are offering a lift or requesting one. The database allows users to search for other users making the same or similar journeys. When a suitable match is identified the running costs are divided between those travelling which acts as an incentive for sharing the journey.
The majority of registered car-sharers tend to live in urban areas but there is the potential for those living in more rural areas to benefit from car-sharing. Leicestershire already has a car-sharing scheme, set up under its Choose How You Move programme,

called [Choose How You Move Carshare](#). The scheme covers the county area and Leicester.

20) What are car clubs?

A car club is a pool of cars for the use of local people. Members can hire the club's vehicles, as and when they require. Car clubs give their members the flexibility of using a car for private or business journeys, without the costs of owning or maintaining one. Each car club either owns or leases cars that are then made available to their local community for short-term use. The club covers the cost of the insurance, tax and servicing of the vehicles with people usually paying an annual fee to be a member and a charge per hour to hire a vehicle when they require one. There is also usually a mileage charge, but fuel is included in the cost of the hire. Bookings can be made via a website or over the telephone.

Car Clubs usually operate in urban areas; however, they have also been used to improve accessibility in rural areas, particularly in Scotland, operating in small villages such as [Creetown](#) in Dumfriesshire, as well as on the island of [Bute](#). The clubs are either run by local volunteers or supported by a local development body. Car clubs which have been set up in rural communities have required significant resource to promote their services, in addition to varying amounts of ongoing subsidy.

Carplus is a not-for-profit, environmental transport Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) which promotes car clubs and 2+ car sharing. They provide [guidance](#) on setting up community and informal car clubs