

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 22 FEBRUARY 2018

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 58-2018

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details work that is being undertaken to remodel passenger transport services for the people of Dundee and seeks approval to establish an in-house transport operation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the establishment of an in-house transport operation capable of providing a range of transport services from the start of financial year 2018-19 and the discontinuance of the Taxicard Scheme on 31 March 2018.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The establishment of an in-house transport operation replacing the 'Friendly Bus' and the changes to the Taxicard Scheme will result in a saving of £150K per annum from the Sustainable Transport Revenue budget.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council's Engage Dundee survey and the more recent 'What Stops You Getting Out' survey conducted by Dundee Voluntary Action have highlighted that local connectivity and social isolation are key areas for improvement across the city. Scottish Household Statistics issued in September 2017 show that 44.8% of Dundee households do not have access to a private car and, therefore, rely on other modes of travel particularly public transport.
- 4.2 The Council has traditionally addressed the passenger transport needs of its citizens through three main initiatives; firstly, supporting local bus services through subsidy (award of contracts); secondly, discounting taxi travel for people with restricted mobility through the Taxicard Scheme; and, thirdly, supporting shopping journeys through the 'Friendly Bus' and its successor the 'Good to Go Bus'.
- 4.3 The findings of the recent consultations and engagement exercises suggest that the traditional approaches described above are not effectively addressing the specific travel needs of those sectors of the Dundee population that are experiencing the greatest social and economic disadvantage. It is considered that redesigned transport services are required to deliver more positive impacts for the city. A Changing for the Future project has been established to review the current provision and to redesign the delivery model for these services. This report is partly based on the work undertaken to date on this project and details the proposed next steps.

5 RECENT PROGRESS

- 5.1 The Transport Public Social Partnership (PSP) pilot project between Dundee City Council and a third sector consortium of partners including Factory Travel, Mid Lin Day Care and the Dundee Social Enterprise Network (DSEN) came to an end on 31 October 2017. Members approved the establishment of the Transport PSP in March 2015 (City Development Committee, Article V, Report No.117-2015 refers).
- 5.2 During the 2 year pilot period, a number of travel services have been delivered under the brand of "Good to Go". These services include a weekday shoppers' service, organised outings for community groups and a late afternoon drop-off service.

- 5.3 Provision of the weekday shoppers' service has been maintained using a Council minibus and Council employees from 1 November 2017. This change of operation was one of the first steps in a long-term project to deliver additional services to the people of Dundee with Council assets, including the fleet of Council minibuses.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The Council is now embarking on an ambitious plan to develop its capacity to deliver passenger transport services directly to the public and has already begun the necessary process of centralising the Council's driver pool and minibus fleet. This is already reducing costs around the provision of home to school transport.
- 6.2 With these recent changes, the Council is now in an improved position to operate 'not for profit' bus services for citizens using its own fleet of minibuses. The Council's vehicle and driver resources have been reorganised so that they are managed by the Fleet Management Team within the City Development service. This enables the vehicles and drivers to be deployed to deliver multiple services for a variety of clients both within and beyond the Council. Operating costs will be met by the client body using revenue funding streams. Minibuses are already used to deliver the statutory function of home to school transport and the proposals will focus on using these assets (vehicles and drivers) during the off-peak period between school hours, delivering services for older people.
- 6.3 The Council's Sustainable Transport Team and its Fleet Management Team are reviewing their current offering of services with a view to redesigning a more responsive passenger transport service, capable of delivering journeys to those most in need at a more affordable cost. Over time, the staffing resources will be reviewed to enhance the capacity of the Council to deliver transport services in the late afternoon, evenings and at weekends and school holidays. Members of the Dundee Transport Forum and the Council's Disability and Age Group will be encouraged to participate in the development of any new services. Following this process of co-design and from April 2018 Dundee City Council will begin to pilot a number of community services using its own in-house minibuses and drivers.
- 6.4 In advance of the wider co-design exercise involving community partners, the Council will begin trialing a new minibus service from early March 2018. This new service will operate in areas of the city that have been identified as having a higher level of unmet travel demand. The minibus service will only be available to people with restricted mobility and will provide improved links between residential areas (with no or limited bus services) and local amenities including shops and GP surgeries. The new service will be a members' only service and Taxicard holders will be given automatic membership to this new service. Initially, routes will be trialed in Coldside & Stobswell and in Dryburgh & Lochee.
- 6.5 The developing capacity of the Council to deliver bespoke transport services has the potential to benefit neighbouring local authorities, NHS Tayside and the Scottish Ambulance Service. The Council will actively pursue shared service opportunities with partner organisations.
- 6.6 A new Transport Act for Scotland is expected to go before the Scottish Parliament in 2018/2019 and this is likely to give local authorities enhanced powers to operate bus services. The work proposed as part of this project will place Dundee City Council in a better position to make use of these new powers if they become available.

7 TAXICARD SCHEME

- 7.1 The current Taxicard Scheme was originally launched in 1992 by Tayside Regional Council and was continued by Dundee City Council from 1996. The scheme was not rolled out by Perth & Kinross Council and was subsequently dropped by Angus Council in 2015.

- 7.2 At its inception, the Taxicard scheme was intended to support passengers who were unable to use buses. However, the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) have subsequently made local buses much more accessible for disabled users, including wheelchair users, thereby removing one of the key purposes of the Taxicard Scheme.
- 7.3 At the start of 2018, a new commercial offering called 'Easy-On' was launched by Scot Blue Ltd (trading as Scottish Blue). Using private hire vehicles licensed by Dundee City Council, Easy-On will offer regular shared journeys to Ninewells and Kings Cross Hospitals for a flat fare of £5.00 from anywhere in the city. If this venture proves successful, it will provide an important and valuable additional transport service for Dundee. An identified priority within the city is improving access to healthcare appointments and it is proposed that this new service, being developed by Scottish Blue, is supported on a 'test of change' basis. The 'test of change' will be formalised and success of the service will be evaluated by Dundee Transport Forum members and the service provider once Easy-On has been in operation for an agreed period.
- 7.4 The Taxicard scheme provides members with a £2.00 discount which is deducted from the commercial taxi fare. Scheme members are limited to 104 discounted trips per annum (averaging one return trip per week). Around 75,000 journeys are made each year and it is estimated that there are around 1,500 active users.
- 7.5 Until 2013 the scheme was operated with smartcard technology, but changes within the Dundee taxi trade coupled with the cost of installing smart card readers in every taxi, saw the scheme move to a non-smart delivery model. Although periodic checks are undertaken, the scheme is now more open to misuse than before and there is no realistic solution to this without very significant investment in the scheme.
- 7.6 The scheme benefits from having a simple booking process harnessing the 24 hour availability of taxi office call centres and gives members the opportunity to travel at any time. The major criticism from users is that the discount is small and usage is restricted to 104 trips per annum. The removal of the scheme would not diminish the availability of taxi travel, but make it more expensive to scheme members by removing the £2.00 discount; however, trends show that only around 100 taxicard members use their full annual trip allowance.
- 7.7 The year on year spend on the Taxicard scheme has been reducing as members make less use of the scheme. The availability of a £2.00 reduction in each taxi fare does not create any measurable increase in demand or address members travel needs. It is therefore proposed that the Taxicard Scheme will cease on 31 March 2018 and up to £50K of the budget be reinvested in the development of the Council's in-house capacity to deliver new transport services.
- 7.8 It is further proposed that no further Taxicard application forms will be issued and those applications already in process will be discontinued and applicants advised in writing of this decision. A communication strategy will be developed to help ensure members are aware of the cessation of the Taxicard Scheme and of the alternative transport services the Council will be providing to meet their needs.

8 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk and an Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out.

9 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 All members of the Council Management Team have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

Mike Galloway
Executive Director of City Development

Neil Gellatly
Head of Roads and Transportation

NHG/JB/KM

8 February 2018

Dundee City Council
Dundee House
Dundee



Committee Report No: 58-2018

Document Title: Passenger Transport Review

Document Type: Policy

New/Existing: New

Period Covered: from 1 April 2018

Document Description:

Committee report seeking approval to re-organise passenger transport services.

Intended Outcome:

Cessation of Taxicard Scheme and reallocation of resources to other transport services.

How will the proposal be monitored? N/A

Author Responsible:

Name: John Berry

Title: Sustainable Transport Team Leader

Department: City Development

E-Mail: john.berry@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 01382 433537

Address: Dundee House

Director Responsible:

Name: Mike Galloway

Title: Executive Director

Department: City Development

E-Mail: mike.galloway@dundee.gov.uk

Telephone: 01382 433610

Address: Dundee House

A. Equality and Diversity Impacts:

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Age: | Negative |
| Disability: | Negative |
| Gender Reassignment: | No Impact |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership: | No Impact |
| Pregnancy and Maternity: | No Impact |
| Race/Ethnicity: | No Impact |
| Religion or Belief: | No Impact |
| Sex: | No Impact |
| Sexual Orientation: | No Impact |

Equality and diversity Implications:

The Taxicard Scheme is exclusively used by Disabled Passengers.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

There is a continuing project of re-organisation of Dundee City Council vehicle and staff resources to ensure the Council is in a position to deliver more transport services for those most in need. From March 2018, Dundee City Council will introduce a new minibus service targeted at people with restricted mobility. These services will operate in areas of the city that have been identified as having higher levels of unmet travel demand. During 2018, further services, co-designed by community partners, will be developed.

All buses providing local bus services are now fully accessible and have been from January 2017. Dundee City Council continues its programme of making bus stops more accessible through raising kerb heights.

There will be no restriction placed on the availability of taxis in Dundee. Taxis fares in Dundee have remained unchanged since April 2015.

In early 2018, a new commercial Demand Responsive Transport service was launched by Scot Blue Ltd. This new service, Easy-On, provides door to door journeys for passengers travelling from anywhere in Dundee to Ninewells Hospital or Kings Cross Hospital for a flat fare of £5.00.

Is the proposal subject to a full EQIA? : No

The Taxicard Scheme is exclusively used by Disabled Passengers.

B. Fairness and Poverty Impacts:**Geography**

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Strathmartine (Ardler, St Mary's and Kirkton): | No Impact |
| Lochee (Lochee/Beechwood, Charleston and Menzieshill): | No Impact |
| Coldside (Hilltown, Fairmuir and Coldside): | No Impact |
| Maryfield (Stobswell and City Centre): | No Impact |
| North East (Whitfield, Fintry and Mill O' Mains): | No Impact |
| East End (Mid Craigie, Linlathen and Douglas): | No Impact |
| The Ferry: | No Impact |
| West End: | No Impact |

Household Group

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Lone Parent Families: | No Impact |
| Greater Number of children and/or Young Children: | No Impact |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Pensioners - Single/Couple: | Negative |
| Single female households with children: | No Impact |
| Unskilled workers or unemployed: | No Impact |
| Serious and enduring mental health problems: | No Impact |
| Homeless: | No Impact |
| Drug and/or alcohol problems: | No Impact |
| Offenders and Ex-offenders: | No Impact |
| Looked after children and care leavers: | No Impact |
| Carers: | Negative |

Significant Impact

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Employment: | No Impact |
| Education and Skills: | No Impact |
| Benefit Advice/Income Maximisation: | No Impact |
| Childcare: | No Impact |
| Affordability and Accessibility of services: | Negative |

Fairness and Poverty Implications:

The cost of taxi travel will increase when the £2.00 discount that is provided by the Taxicard Scheme is removed. This discount is available for one return trip per week, 104 trips per annum.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

The Council seeks to develop a number of alternative, affordable passenger services for those most in need. These will be co-designed by with community representatives working within the Dundee Transport Forum.

C. Environmental Impacts

Climate Change

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Mitigating greenhouse gases: | No Impact |
| Adapting to the effects of climate change: | No Impact |

Resource Use

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Energy efficiency and consumption: | No Impact |
| Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling waste: | No Impact |
| Sustainable Procurement: | No Impact |

Transport

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Accessible transport provision: | No Impact |
| Sustainable modes of transport: | Positive |

Natural Environment

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Air, land and water quality: | No Impact |
| Biodiversity: | No Impact |



Open and green spaces:

No Impact

Built Environment

Built Heritage:

No Impact

Housing:

No Impact

Is the proposal subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Proposed Mitigating Actions:

N/A

Environmental Implications:

None

D. Corporate Risk Impacts

Corporate Risk Implications:

Corporate Risk Mitigating Actions: