

Subject: Transport links to, and within Gedling Borough

Date: 20 July 2015

Author: Councillor L Pearson

Working Group Members: Councillors Pearson (Chair) Feeney, Paling, Truscott, D Ellis, P Andrews, G Clarke.

Members from the Gedling Youth Council: George Sullivan, Ashlea Pringle and Harry Gabb.

1. Purpose of the Report

To present the final report and recommendations of the Transport links to, and within Gedling Borough Scrutiny working group.

2. Background

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a scrutiny review to examine a range of issues related to transport networks both to, and within, the borough. This review was one of three strategically linked in-depth reviews proposed in the 2013/4 Scrutiny work programme. The overarching aim was to examine progress of the Council's ambitions as a community leader; driving ongoing partnership approaches in securing social and economic sustainability within Gedling Borough.

This review sought to explore the potential of major strategic transport initiatives now underway, as well as examining how well Gedling residents are served with current transport arrangements within the Borough. It included:

- considering current and future transport initiatives and services to, and within the borough to identify gaps in provision
- finding out how local people can influence local transport and services
- considering how travel and transport information might be better promoted
- establishing the availability of services for young people, the elderly and disabled

The review included an examination of the effectiveness of radial/cross-borough and inter district transport and concerns around equality of access to public transport. It considered issues linked to access to employment, training, leisure, health and retail facilities, seeking to make recommendations that will improve the impact of transport on the local economy.

Rail services are currently available in Gedling and provide valuable transport provision for Gedling residents who reside near railways stations. Newstead is well served by the Robin Hood Line, and Carlton and Netherfield by the Nottingham Newark line. However, as the majority of public transport journeys undertaken in the borough are by bus this has been the main focus of the review.

The review received briefings from the corporate director with the strategic lead for transport initiatives, members of the Gedling Youth Council Transport sub-group: Transport for young people, Colin West, TravelRight Coordinator, Mark Hudson, Group Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council Transport and Travel Services.

3. Information

- **Gedling Borough's Transport Initiatives**

Members were informed by Stephen Bray, corporate director with the strategic lead for transport initiatives that transport in Gedling works as part of a conurbation with

most areas in the borough accessible by travelling into Nottingham city centre and out again, however cross borough transport links are poor. Nottinghamshire bus services are one of the best in the country due to the nature of the two main bus operators, Nottingham City Transport and Trent Barton.

Members learnt that transport initiatives undertaken by Gedling Borough aim to:

- improve connectivity, jobs and inward investment linked to the wider objectives of economic development
- progress links to sustainability.

The Council is presently trying to define its long term ambitions, complimentary to the planning process, looking 10 to 15 years into the future in addition to pursuing conurbation wide aspirations.

The need for transport infrastructure influences the planning process and there are two strands of work underway to support this:

I. Transport Vision

The vision aims to boost the local economy by creating better connections between homes, jobs and education both within Gedling and the surrounding conurbation.

This includes:

- progress towards the Gedling Access Road (GAR) which will link Mapperley Plains Road B684 and the A612 Burton Road, this major project begins on site in March 2015 with completion in 2019. The road is linked to the redevelopment of the Gedling Colliery site including the building of 900 houses which will significantly boost new housing in the borough. Wider benefits are improvements to traffic movements between the two main routes in and out of Nottingham in addition to improving the general environment of Gedling Village
- the the possible construction of a fourth Trent crossing at Colwick This has been a long held aspiration which would open up access to jobs and services, cutting out a long journey and opening up access to the east of

Gedling borough which at the moment is limited by the river. The Local Enterprise Partnership, as the vehicle for allocating funding for transport initiatives, has been involved in the planning process along with Newark and Sherwood District, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Funding is currently being sought for a further feasibility study. This is very much a long term plan but the possibility of it happening is increasing

- assessing the impact of HS2 and the potential of a connecting train to Toton, which could be part of the Birmingham, Netherfield/Colwick rail line
- advancing and encouraging potential train/tram links to the borough. There are a number of possible routes but all proposals are 10 years plus from inception to implementation
- promoting Southside (City Council Plan) development and improvements to park and ride facilities.

Gedling Borough has a representative on the local transport partnership which feeds into the Local Enterprise Partnership. This body is very influential in relation to the direction of Department of Transport funding. There are just two district council representatives on the partnership, Gedling and Derby. This representation enabled the authority to secure funding to progress the Gedling Access Road.

II. Local Sustainable Transport Plan

Gedling Borough supports 'TravelRight' and 'Ridewise' which is a national initiative aimed at promoting sustainable travel habits. Members received a briefing from Colin West, TravelRight Coordinator and were informed that Local Sustainable Transport Scheme is a free initiative which supports communities in Gedling Borough. It has been running for twelve months and aims is to influence the travel habits of the adult population providing tailored guidance to residents and businesses to make travel around Nottingham cheaper, easier and quicker. It offers a range of events and support services encouraging more walking, cycling and use of public transport in the borough. The project assists young people and job seekers to access work, learning and training and engages with local schools and businesses to promote sustainable transport. There are number travel hubs throughout the county working to influence transport issues and inform the public about travel support for job seekers and new starters. The scheme is currently funded to March 2015. Whilst

ongoing funding is possible, there is a risk that the scheme could lose the accelerated momentum that happens in the second year. Available funding streams include the European Social Fund, health and CO2 reduction strands. A pending 'Reaching Communities' bid may address this.

Specific areas of work include:

- exploring a possible extension of the Jobseeker City card which gives access to half price kangaroo travel in Gedling Borough
- a survey in respect of the impact of the Gedling Country Park
- street surveys to monitor travel habits
- provision of different levels of cycle training
- the Big Wheel initiative which helps businesses to produce workplace travel plans to encourage staff to use public transport.
- looking at ways of unlocking the transport system in order to enable maximum use by the public, for example displaying maps on bus stops and time table information availability via mobile phone apps.

- **Services for Young People**

Members of the Gedling Youth Council Transport Sub-Group: Transport for young people presented their views on local public transport. They indicated that generally young people were happy with the frequency and information available regarding bus services in Gedling. They did however feel that:

- travel costs are high resulting in some young people not travelling as often as they would like. The season ticket service is useful, but the upfront costs are unreachable for some young people
- the real time displays on bus stops are very helpful but not always accurate
- there are some issues with transport services in rural areas, between villages and across districts
- more could be done to make young people aware of different travel initiatives, i.e. Kangaroo tickets
- the possibility of creating dual Kangaroo zones, travel within the city one price, and wider travel within the county set at a slightly higher price should be explored. It was acknowledged that it would be difficult getting all the various operators to agree

- use of the branding and advertising opportunities of public transport could be increased
- schemes to change travel habits should be pitched to young people, as they are able to take on change more readily.

- **County Council Responsibilities**

Mark Hudson, Group Manager, NCC Transport and Travel outlined the County Council responsibilities; these include financially supporting some local bus services, administering the concessionary travel, special educational needs, home to school and adult social care transport schemes, some legal duties relating to bus services across the county and the County Council vehicle fleet.

Bus services in England and Wales were deregulated in 1986 which allowed commercial providers to provide services. The majority of bus services in Greater Nottingham are operated on a commercial basis, however the County Council will provide subsidised bus journeys where they are deemed to be socially necessary and where bus operators are unable to provide the services commercially. To provide this the County Council currently has a budget of 4.2 million a 60% drop since 1985. Budget reductions have resulted in some services being deleted.

Decisions to provide subsidised services are taken on a case by case basis and assessed on need and value for money. When funding is not available a formula is used to work out spend taking into account primarily work, education and training needs before consideration is given to gaps in provision for leisure and shopping transportation and Sunday services. In areas where more than one service exists the routes tend to be designed to complement each other. There are particular issues with rural services and the County Council is working to provide services on routes and at times people need and when they would use them.

The County Council is always open to suggestions from local people on possible service improvements. These might not always be able to be accommodated due to a range of reasons including the need for commercial operators to make a profit, lack of subsidy or low passenger numbers making routes not viable. £300,000 is spent annually supporting services in Gedling. The goal of the County Council is to provide services which will enable people to connect with commercial transport services into

the city. Cross borough routes are not so numerous due to lack of passenger numbers making them unviable. Nottsbus Connect is a network of connecting local bus services, helping to improve public transport links across the county. It provides feeder routes from local villages onto the main transport network. This has been particularly useful in rural areas and a successful project has been up and running in the Bassetlaw area since autumn 2014.

Commercial operators have to give 56 days notice to amend or cut services although in practice they usually give more, allowing the County Council time to plan a replacement. This will shortly increase to 90 days. If a route fails this will initially be offered to other commercial operators who may be willing to tender for the route or reroute an existing service to cover the gap. The County Council will sometimes contract a service for 6 months on a 'use it or lose it' basis. Problems exist with the provision of rural bus services and establishing services that people want, particularly in the evening and at weekends.

The County Council supports the work of community and voluntary transport schemes which supplement the public transport network by offering services tailored to the needs of people who may have difficulty in using, or are unable to use, ordinary buses. Schemes are available throughout the county and operate on a not for profit basis normally using volunteers, though there will be a charge for using the service. Some community transport schemes only cater for certain types of journey, e.g. medical appointments, while others offer journeys for a wide range of other needs, e.g., shopping, day care, visiting (e.g., hospital, friends), etc. An example of this in Gedling is the Ravenshead Community Transport initiative. There is a big commitment to travel training; this is especially useful for young people with disabilities so that they don't become dependent on taxi services.

Work is undertaken to promote bus services to new housing developments, encouraging the use of public transport, for example offering free transport for a limited period.

Plans for the future include:

- greater use of the new low floor vehicles, which are currently used predominantly for social care, for community transport schemes. Currently there are 11 vehicles able to do this and this is being rolled out to include a further 20.

- considering the possibility of using taxis and private hire vehicles as buses for connecting services. Currently there are few cross borough buses as they are not viable.
- examining the possibility setting up of community bus partnerships, this could involve working with commercial operators and community organisations, possibly parish or district councils, to publicise and consult on time tables, location of bus stops etc.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

People in Gedling use transport services for a variety of reasons including travelling to education, employment and training, health and social care appointments and for entertainment and leisure activities. Public transport has a wide ranging influence on the economic prosperity and wellbeing of the residents of Gedling Borough; however the authority has few responsibilities and limited influence around transport provision and policy.

The Councils overall objectives for transport are to promote growth and ensure that transport issues do not constrain growth whilst supporting the Council's sustainability agenda. These aspirations are reflected in two streams of the Council's work on transport:

- a long term strategic aim to build a better connected Greater Nottingham
- delivery of sustainable transport initiatives.

The long term aim recognises that Gedling has been something of a transport backwater and a lot of effort has been done to mitigate this with the agreed construction of the Gedling Access Road and the possibility of a fourth Trent crossing. Members considered that the construction of the bridge would be of considerable benefit to the residents of the borough and progress towards the building of the bridge should be supported.

Recommendation 1

Gedling Borough Council alongside partner organisations continues to actively pursue the building of a Fourth Trent crossing.

Members considered that the development of a park and ride site in the North of the County is something that should be considered. Not only could this reduce

congestion and ease traffic flow into Nottingham, Co2 emissions would also be reduced.

Recommendation 2

Investigate the feasibility of introducing a park and ride facility in the north of the borough.

65% of the population of Gedling work in the City and residents have access to good transport links provided they are able to travel to Nottingham City Centre and onwards from there. Commercial bus operators provide a good service primarily due to having two established operators. Issues arise however when bus services are required between different areas across the borough Members appreciate that services operate on a commercial basis, that the County Council has a finite budget for the provision of subsidised services and that it is not possible to operate services that are not going to be well used and viable. However they considered that this lack of cross district travel could disadvantage people when seeking employment, attending training and education, shopping or wishing to undertake leisure activities. They felt that this was a particular problem between the Mapperley and Arnold communities

Recommendation 3

The potential for improved bus services linking the Arnold and Mapperley communities be investigated.

Fare levels and ticketing issues were of particular concern and Members thought that an integrated ticketing system, across providers, for all residents in Gedling would be beneficial. Currently the Kangaroo ticket scheme administered by Nottingham City Transport allows unlimited travel on most buses within the Kangaroo boundary. In Gedling the boundary extends to the end of the City Transport network and although it does include travel across different bus operators this does not apply to areas outside the boundary which have services provided by Trent Barton.

Job seekers who have been seeking work for 13 weeks or longer are able to purchase half price Kangaroo tickets if they travel within the Kangaroo boundary. This again works to the disadvantage of people living outside the boundary and who have to use services not provided by the City Transport network.

Recommendation 4

Investigate the feasibility of Nottingham City Transport extending the boundary for the use of Kangaroo tickets.

Members of the Youth Council had a number of ideas about how to increase bus use, principally looking at ways of making journeys more affordable for young people. They considered that young people as the bus passengers of the future should be actively encouraged to use public transport for social, economic and environmental reasons. They felt that the range of discounted fares available should increase. Currently there fares available for under 5's, 5 - 15 year olds and college, university and further education students using NCT City Card on bus journeys within in the city boundary. Trent Barton has similar discounts plus a Mango which gives a 35% reduction for 16 – 19 year olds. Young people between 16 and 19 living in Gedling using Nottingham City Transport have no access to discounted travel. The raising of the school leaving age from summer 2015 requires young people to participate in full time education in a school or college, an apprenticeship or accredited learning if in full time employment and Members considered that the concession applying to 5 – 15 year olds should be raised to include 16 – 19 year olds. In addition the purchasing of advance tickets offering unlimited travel on every day of the week, both day and night for a specified period although useful for some passengers does not meet the need of all bus users. A system that allows the purchase of a ticket for a stated number of journeys, without a date restriction, or a system similar to the Trent Barton Mango rechargeable card would be much more acceptable for use by young people.

Recommendation 5

Investigate the feasibility of increasing the age limit for concessionary fares to 19.

Recommendation 6

Consider the use of a ticketing system that enabled a ticket for a specified number of journeys to be made available.

Members heard about a range of initiatives which exist to encourage people to use public transport but Members considered that a marketing campaign targeting young

people would be valuable. Members of the Youth Council had a wide range of ideas they thought could encourage more young people to use public transport including apps, text messaging and time tables in schools.

Recommendation 7

A marketing campaign, incorporating ideas from young people, is undertaken to target and encourage more use of bus services by young people

Members considered that the initiatives undertaken by the TravelRight sustainable transport programme made a valuable contribution in supporting sustainable travel in the borough. They considered that this scheme benefited a wide range of residents by offering information about a range of different travel options and had an important role in representing local people on transport issues.

Recommendation 8

Support the continuation of the TravelRight scheme.

Members felt strongly that transport concerns should be at the forefront of planning issues when housing developments were considered. This was important during the planning process for any new housing development but particularly at the Gedling Colliery site. Opportunities to identify Section 106/SIL contributions should be sought early in any planned development.

Recommendation 9

Transport officers from both the Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council should be involved at an early stage in planning applications to ensure that opportunities for Section 106/SIL contributions are identified.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Gedling Borough Council alongside partner organisations continues to actively pursue the building of a Fourth Trent crossing.

Recommendation 2

Investigate the feasibility of introducing a park and ride facility in the north of the borough.

Recommendation 3

The potential for improved bus services linking the Arnold and Mapperley communities be investigated.

Recommendation 4

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5. Acknowledgements

- Members of the Gedling Youth Council Transport sub group George Sullivan, Ashlea Pringle and Harry Gabb.**

- Stephen Bray, Corporate Director
- Colin West TraveRigh Coordinator
- Mark Hudson, Group Manager Nottinghamshire County Council Transport and Travel Services

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Scope.



Scope

Scrutiny committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Working Group:	Transport Links to, and within Gedling Borough
Chair of group:	Councillor Pearson
Working group members:	Councillors: Feeney, Paling, Pearson, Truscott, D. Ellis, P. Andrews and G. Clarke.
Portfolio holder/s:	Councillors WJ Clarke and Pulk
Corporate Director:	Stephen Bray and Paula Darlington

(1) Scope

Why this review is being undertaken

(List the specific outcomes – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime bound)

This review was proposed in recognition of the Council's growth agenda, and seeks to explore the potential of major strategic transport initiatives now underway, as well as examining how well Gedling residents are served with current transport arrangements within the Borough. The focus of the review will be access to jobs, training, leisure, health and retail facilities.

Included in the review will be an examination of the effectiveness of radial/cross-borough and inter-district transport and equality of access to public transport.

Aims

Aim	Corporate Values
Consider current and future transport initiatives and services to and within the Borough, identify any gaps in provision.	1. A caring and fair Council that treats customers, residents, partners and staff well
Examine how local people can influence local transport plans and services.	2. A listening Council that listens to and involves the people it serves
Consider how travel and transport information might be better promoted.	3. An ambitious Council one that is never satisfied and constantly hungry for improvement
Take account of rural, urban and suburban needs, the availability of services to young people, the elderly and disabled.	4. A responsive Council that is sensitive to different needs and acts accordingly
The impact of transport initiatives on the environment will be included as part of the review.	5. An efficient Council that is responsible; that avoids waste and makes the most of what it has

(2) Timetable

The review will commence in:	July 2014
Milestones:	Work programme to be agreed
The review will report in:	Approximately 3 months
Committee dates:	
Frequency of meetings:	6 weekly cycle

(3) Information gathering and consultees

The working group has requested the following information:

Details of major transport initiatives including the Gedling Access Road, 4th Trent Crossing, proposals for the extension of tram and rail services and the Local Sustainable Transport Plan.

Details of transport links within the Borough, including Citylink Services, Community Transport and private services.

Details of concessionary travel schemes.

What are the main questions to be asked and of what parties?

- Corporate Director and Portfolio Holder – what role does Gedling play in influencing Conurbation wide proposals for transport infrastructure?
- Travelwise/ Sustainable Transport Plan – how does the project resolve local needs and expectations with the aims, milestones, and targets of the fund? What specific benefits does the scheme aim to provide?
- Nottingham City Council – Citylink – what scope might there be to work in partnership to improve radial transport links?
- Nottinghamshire County Council – Adult Social Care Team/transport fleet – how might the transport fleet be maximised – explore possible use of fleet for community transport during down times?
- Localities co-ordinators – what mechanisms are in place for local people to influence the quality of transport services in their areas?
- GBC Planning Department – how is the need for transport infrastructure assessed as part of the planning process?

The working group may be inviting the following persons/organisations to one or more meetings to help with the review:

Representatives of the Transportation Sub Group of Gedling Youth Council

Colin West – Travelwise/Local Sustainable Transport Plan Coordinator

Mark Hudson – Group Manager, NCC Adult Social Care Transport Fleet

Visits

The working group might need to consider:

N/A

(4) How the community will be consulted, informed and involved

The working group wishes to consult through:

Representatives of the Transportation Sub Group of Gedling Youth Council

(5) Equality of opportunity

The following Equality Impact Assessment method will be applied

Examination of the availability of services to young people, older people and protected groups. Assessment of rural/urban provision and equality of access to jobs, training, health and other services

(6) Resources

The working group is supported by:

Senior Members' Services Officer

(6) How the effectiveness of the review will be measured

Follow up of agreed recommendations to be undertaken at an appropriate point by Overview Scrutiny Committee.