Recommendations from the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board's Select Committee on Public Transport

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Executive Summary:

At their meeting on 15th February 2017, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) held a select committee style meeting to answer the following key lines of enquiry.

- How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?
- How can we improve the bus service in the city?
- What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?

Members heard evidence from Council Officers, representatives from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Coventry Older Voices, Transport Focus (a user voice organisation) as well as Stagecoach Midlands and NX Coventry.

After hearing evidence provided by the witnesses, Members identified several recommendations, which were subsequently agreed by the Board on 22 March 2017 and considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 12 April 2017.

These recommendations have come to Cabinet as they cover more than one Cabinet Member portfolio, plus outside bodies.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1) Request that the nominated Council representative on the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) board recommend that TfWM:

    i. Involve Elected Members and local residents in their planned car parking at Stations review.
    ii. Consider how to better involve local people in planning the delivery of services, beyond existing processes, including older people.
    iii. Consider how to ensure older people have access to information about public transport beyond social media and on-line information

2) Acknowledge the positive relationship the Council has with TfWM and the benefits of this relationship to the city.

3) Ensure that Members of the Council are actively involved in the transport theme group of the Age-Friendly Coventry initiative.

4) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities Advisory Panel – Disability Equality considers the issue of accessibility to public transport, particularly in relation to reducing social isolation

5) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration commission a bus-user and non-user survey, specifically for Coventry, to identify specific local issues and concerns in order to promote buses as a mode of transport and increase usage.

6) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for City Services undertake a review of Council vehicle usage, particularly during school hours, to see whether the vehicles could be used to support the transport requirements of vulnerable, ill and elderly people in the City.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Briefing note – Public Transport Select Committee – outcomes and learning

Other useful background papers:

None

Other useful papers:

Members of the Board received several briefing papers in preparation for the select committee. These can be found here:

http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=570&MId=11101&Ver=4

Document Title	Type	Date
Select Committee Process	Briefing note	12th Oct 16
Effective Questioning for Scrutiny	Background	
Public Transport in Coventry	Briefing note	8th July 16
Connecting Coventry – Strategic Investment Programme	Cabinet Report	24th Jan 17
Coventry Rail Story & Rail Investment Strategy	Briefing note	2nd Nov 16
Coventry Rail Story	Background	
Coventry Station Masterplan Update	Cabinet Report	24th Jan 17
HS2 Connectivity	Briefing note	14th Dec 16
HS2 Connectivity	Presentation	14th Dec 16
Bus Usage	Briefing note	2nd Nov 16
West Midlands Bus Alliance	Background	
Transport for an Aging Population	Briefing note	21st Sept 16
Coventry Older Voices	Written evidence	

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?
Yes - Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) – 26th July 2017

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?
No

Will this report go to Council?
No

Report title: *Recommendations from the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board's Select Committee on Public Transport*

1 Context (or background)

1.1 At their informal meeting on 8th June 2016 the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) agreed to hold a select committee style meeting to consider issues around public transport.

1.2 At their meeting on 15th February 2017, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) held a select committee style meeting to answer the following key lines of enquiry.

- How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?
- How can we improve the bus service in the city?
- What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?

1.3 Members heard evidence from Council Officers, representatives from Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Coventry Older Voices, Transport Focus (a user voice organisation) as well as Stagecoach Midlands and NX Coventry.

1.4 After hearing evidence provided by the witnesses, Members identified several recommendations, which were subsequently agreed by the Board on 22 March 2017 and considered by Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 12 April 2017.

2 Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Option 1: Do nothing

2.1.1 After hearing evidence and considering background information, Members identified that there was further work to be done in several areas around the issue of public transport, therefore doing nothing was not considered as a viable option.

2.2 Option 2: Make recommendations to Cabinet

2.2.1 Following evidence from witnesses presented at the meeting and several background briefing sessions, Members of the Board were able to identify several recommendations that could go to address the issues that were raised at the meeting.

2.2.2 The format of the select committee meeting followed the three key lines of enquiry, with three sessions and appropriate witnesses invited to each session.

2.2.3 More detail on the methodology and approach taken as part of the select committee process can be found in Appendix 1.

Outcomes of the Select Committee

2.3 **Session 1 - How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?**

2.3.1 Members received presentations from Toby Rackliff, Rail Strategy Manager, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on rail transport and growth in the West Midlands and Malcolm Holmes, Programme Director, TfWM on West Midlands Rail Devolution. The presentation provided an understanding of West Midlands Rail Ltd, which is a partnership of Local Authorities including the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).

2.3.2 The Board raised a number of questions in response to the presentations and responses were provided. Matters raised included:

- How would the provision of a train station in Kenilworth be of benefit to passengers at Tile Hill Station when most passengers were travelling to Birmingham
- The importance of the availability of data relating to the modes of transport used by train passengers to arrive at the Coventry train stations
- What steps were being taken to mitigate the impact on local residents of the 15% increase of passengers using Tile Hill and Canley stations
- The suggestion of using other local authority areas as examples of best practice e.g. York Ring and Ride
- Why couldn't proposals for additional trains be introduced immediately
- The current position relating to the electrification of the Coventry Nuneaton line
- Support for the proposals for branding but, in light of the all the different organisations involved in rail services, the requirement for members of the public to be aware of who was accountable for what
- What was happening with the proposals to increase the West Midlands rail track
- The implications of HS2 on the Coventry to London Euston route and how were Coventry commuters expected to benefit from HS2
- Would there be a central link to improve rail freight
- Following the opening of the KNUCKLE station at the Ricoh, were we on schedule to meet usage targets and information on the service level agreement
- Concerns about any potential charging at the rail park and ride sites at Canley and Tile Hill and the implications for residents in light of increasing usage of these stations
- Concerns about the scheduling and timing of train services from Canley to Birmingham and how could the issues around long waits caused by delays and cancellations be addressed
  - The potential for light rail to be introduced in Coventry and links with Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) at Warwick University
- The length of rail franchise agreements and what was done to protect services when things started to fail
- The position relating to Virgin Trains and why the operator was so influential
- The latest position relating to the importance of securing rail links between Europe and the West Midlands and, in particular, having HS2 linking to St Pancras, and the need to secure the support of MPs to lobby for this.

2.4   **Session 2 - How can we improve the bus service in the city?**

2.4.1   The session started with a brief presentation from David Beer of Passenger Focus who provided information on passenger feedback and the key issues for bus users.

2.4.2   Members also heard from bus service providers National Express Midlands (Martin Hancock) and Stagecoach (Steve Burd). The key issue for service providers was congestion and road works affecting punctuality and also future developments in contactless ticketing and greener buses.

2.4.3   Members also heard from Pete Bond and John Hayes from TfWM who talked about the Bus Alliance, network developments including improved ticketing.

2.4.4   Bridget Harper from Coventry Older Voices provided information on some of the key concerns of older people using public transport which were reliability, access to key services such as health facilities, bus stops, safety and access to information.

2.4.5   The Board raised a number of questions in response to the presentations and responses were provided. Matters raised included:

- Developers designing in access for public transport early in large residential developments
- Information on bus times for the visually impaired
- Impact of bus lanes and potential for removal
- Impact on air quality of people travelling on buses rather than in their cars
- Multi-modal ticketing so passengers can use a variety of transport methods, including cars.
- How members of the public raise concerns and complaints – how do they know who to contact.
- Whether suburban bus hubs could be considered to improve access to local area centres.
- Concerns about safety, especially at night
- The bus service to the hospital
- Driver training in customer service.
- Addressing people's concerns over safety and how best to encourage bus travel.

2.5   **Session 3 - What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?**

2.5.1   The Scrutiny Board received information on the current provision by the Council on transport provided by the Passenger Transport Service. They also considered information from Coventry Older Voices.

2.5.2   Members discussed the following issues:-

- The need to investigate the better utilisation of Council vehicles during the day when they are currently not in use by carrying out a review of existing provision available in the City and consulting on what provision is required by people in the City.
- Issues relating to the current Ring and Ride service, particularly in relation to picking up/dropping off at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire and the current criteria applied to service users.
- Work carried out by the Travel Training Team and the benefits of this work. Consideration of buddy system for older people who have lost confidence or developed mobility issues.

- Cross boundary travel between Warwickshire and the West Midlands and if the West Midlands Combined Authority will provide any opportunities to remove these boundaries

2.5.3 As well as recommendations to Cabinet, the Board also identified recommendations to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee following an evaluation of the process and identification of lessons learned and improvements to the process. These can be found in Appendix 1.

2.6 **Recommendations**

The Cabinet is recommended to

1) Request that the nominated Council representative on the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) board recommend that TfWM:

   i. Involve Elected Members and local residents in their planned car parking at Stations review.
   ii. Consider how to better involve local people in planning the delivery of services, beyond existing processes, including older people.
   iii. Consider how to ensure older people have access to information about public transport beyond social media and on-line information

2) Acknowledge the positive relationship the Council has with TfWM and the benefits of this relationship to the city.

3) Ensure that Members of the Council are actively involved in the transport theme group of the Age-Friendly Coventry initiative.

4) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities Advisory Panel – Disability Equality consider the issue of accessibility to public transport, particularly in relation to reducing social isolation

5) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration commission a bus-user and non-user survey, specifically for Coventry, to identify specific local issues and concerns in order to promote buses as a mode of transport and increase usage.

6) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for City Services undertake a review of Council vehicle usage, particularly during school hours, to see whether the vehicles could be used to support the transport requirements of vulnerable, ill and elderly people in the City.

3 **Results of consultation undertaken**

3.1 No formal consultation has taken place, although members of the public were encouraged to submit questions and comments via social media. The Board also heard evidence from Transport Focus, a public transport user group organisation, who were able to share information from their most recent passenger survey, as well as key priorities for passengers. Coventry Older Voices were also invited to provide feedback from their members on the experience of older people using public transport.

3.2 Also from the provider side of public transport, Members invited and received representation from two bus providers, as well as TfWM.

4   Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1   There is no specific timescale for the implementation of these recommendations, however the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) will request progress reports in six months and 12 months of the decision being made.

5   Comments from Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

5.1   Financial implications
        There should be no direct financial implications from implementing these recommendations, however there could be implications on officer resource for the two suggested reviews on bus users and non-users, and Council vehicle usage.

5.1.1   Legal implications
        There are no legal implications.

6   Other implications

6.1   **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives in the Council Plan?**

        These recommendations will contribute to:

        • Globally Connected: Creating the infrastructure for the city to grow and thrive by:
          – making the city more accessible for businesses, visitors and local people through better road, rail and digital connections.

        • Locally Committed: Protecting our most vulnerable people:
          – enabling people to exercise choice and control in their daily lives.

        • Delivering our Priorities: Making the most of our assets. We will use our increasingly limited resources effectively to make savings so that we can support frontline services by:
          – reducing operating costs and reducing carbon emissions.

6.2   **How is risk being managed**?

        These recommendations present a low risk.

6.3   **What is the impact on the organisation?**

        The impact on the organisation should be minimal. The main impact will be on users of public transport and residents of the city.

6.4   **Equalities / EIA**

        Any equalities impact from these recommendations should be positive, specifically the recommendations about older people accessing public transport. Also, bus users specifically are more likely to be from lower income groups as well as younger and older people.

6.5   **Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

Improving access to public transport will have a considerable positive impact on the environment by taking cars off the road, thereby reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.

6.6   **Implications for partner organisations?**

There are implications for partner organisations, namely TfWM, as several of the recommendations relate directly to the work that they do. Representatives from TfWM actively participated in the select committee and have received copies of the recommendations in the form of the report in Appendix 1.

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board   **Date: 22ⁿᵈ March 2017**
To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee   **Date: 12ᵗʰ April 2017**

Subject: Public Transport Select Committee – outcomes and learning

1   Purpose of the Note

1.1   To inform the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board of the outcomes of the Public Transport Select Committee which was held on 15ᵗʰ February 2017.

2   Recommendations

2.1   The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is recommended to:

1) Recommend that Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)

   a. Involve Elected Members and local residents in their planned car parking at Stations review.

   b. Consider how to better involve local people in planning the delivery of services, beyond existing processes.

2) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration commission a bus-user and non-user survey, just for Coventry, to identify specific local issues and concerns in order to promote buses as a mode of transport and increase usage.

3) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services

   a. Consider developing a travel training programme for older people to support independence and address social isolation

   b. Support the Transport theme group of the Age-Friendly Coventry initiative

4) Recommend that the Cabinet Member for City Services undertake a review of Council vehicle usage, particularly during school hours, to see whether the vehicles could be used to support the transport requirements of vulnerable, ill and elderly people in the City.

5) Acknowledge the positive relationship the Council has with TfWM and the benefits of this relationship to the city.

6) Request the Chair writes to everyone involved with the Select Committee to thank them for their work.

7) Add the following items to their work programme for the next municipal year:

   i.   Multi-modal ticketing, for different modes of transport and for travel cross-boundary, especially with our Combined Authority partners beyond the TfWM area.

   ii.   Ways to address the effect congestion and road works have on public transport

       iii.   Air quality, reducing emissions and greener fleets

       iv.   How to promote and incentivise bus as a mode of transport, including addressing safety concerns

       v.   Outcome of the bus lane review

       vi.   Developments in rapid transport and very light rail

8) Agree to a select committee on accessible transport wider than public transport for the next municipal year.

2.2   Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to:

1) Note the benefits of using a select committee approach for Scrutiny
2) Consider the lessons learned on the process in paragraph 14 for future select committee arrangements
3) Identify other subjects suitable for a select committee on future work programmes across all Boards.

3   Information/Background

3.1   At their informal meeting on 8th June the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board agreed to hold a select committee style meeting to consider issues around public transport.

3.2   The format for the select committee was agreed at the meeting on 12th October.

4   Visit to the House of Commons

4.1   On the 19th July Members of the Board visited the House of Commons to attend a Parliamentary Select Committee meeting.

4.2   As part of this visit Members met with Clive Betts MP the Chair of the Communities and Local Government. They were able to question him on the process of select committee in the Houses of Parliament, which Members found very useful.

4.3   Members also sat in on a session of the Transport Select Committee and were able to observe MP's questioning witnesses for their Vauxhall vehicle fire enquiry.
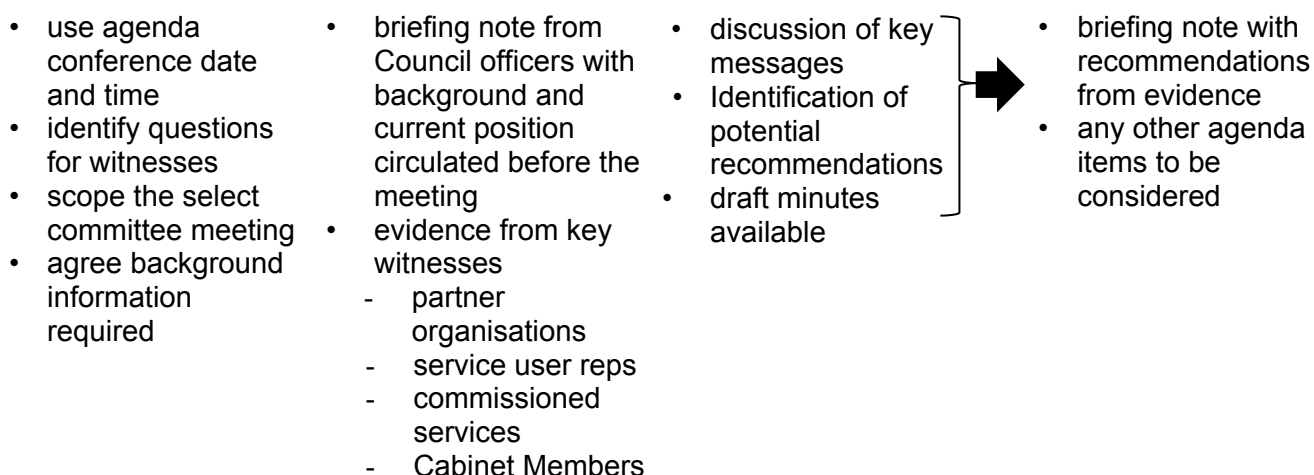
5   Advisory Panel

5.1   This was a group of four Members (Brown, Lancaster, Mayer, McNicholas (chair)) from the Board whose role it was be to clarify and finalise the key lines of enquiry and scope for the meeting. They met beforehand, using the date agreed for the agenda conference, and agreed the key lines of enquiry.

6   Background Briefings and Documentation

6.1   All Members were provided with briefings and background documentation to provide information on the current position. Scrutiny Board meetings were used as briefing sessions with officers to enable Members to fact check, clarify information and also identify any other information and witnesses that may be useful.

6.2   Members received briefings on the following:

- 6th July - Public Transport background and context
- 21st September – Accessible Transport background and context
- 2nd November – Rail Story and Bus Usage background and context
- 14th December – HS2 Connectivity

6.3   In addition to this Members were also provided with background information on:

- Effective Questioning for Scrutiny

Appendix 1

- Connecting Coventry – Strategic Transport Investment Programme
- Coventry Station Masterplan
- Coventry Rail Story

7   Figure 1: Format of the Select Committee

• use agenda conference date and time
• identify questions for witnesses
• scope the select committee meeting
• agree background information required
	• briefing note from Council officers with background and current position circulated before the meeting
	• evidence from key witnesses
	  - partner organisations
	  - service user reps
	  - commissioned services
	  - Cabinet Members
		• discussion of key messages
		• Identification of potential recommendations
		• draft minutes available
			• briefing note with recommendations from evidence
			• any other agenda items to be considered

8   Key Lines of Enquiry

8.1   Members agreed the key line of enquiry would be the following:

- How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?

- How can we improve the bus service in the city?

- What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?

8.2   Once the key lines of enquiry had been identified and agreed witnesses were able to be identified and invited.

9   Witnesses

9.1   The purpose of the Select Committee is to hear evidence on a specific issue, in this case, Public Transport with regard to key lines of enquiry. The witnesses are vital as they are there to provide evidence to the committee on the key lines of enquiry.

9.2   Questions should be tailored to gain evidence from witnesses to answer the key line of enquiry for the select committee. Questions should be open in order to elicit the information from witnesses. Good quality questions will result in good quality evidence. Questions should be agreed beforehand at the pre-meeting.

9.3   The witnesses that attended were:

Session 1- How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?

- Malcolm Holmes   West Midlands Rail
- Toby Rackliff   Transport for West Midlands
- Colin Knight   Coventry City Council

9.4   **Session 2 - How can we improve the bus service in the city?**

- David Beer   Transport Focus
- Pete Bond   Transport for West Midlands
- John Hayes   Transport for West Midlands
- Martin Hancock   NX Coventry
- Steve Burd   Stagecoach Midlands
- Bridget Harper   Coventry Older Voices
- Colin Knight   Coventry City Council

9.5   **Session 3 - What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?**

- Colin Knight   Coventry City Council
- Chris Coyle   Coventry City Council
- Bridget Harper   Coventry Older Voices

10   Involvement of the Public

10.1   Members were very keen to involve members of the public, as users of public transport, in the process.

10.2   Representatives from a number of groups were invited, however only Coventry Older Voices participated fully in the process.

10.3   Transport Focus is the independent transport user watchdog. Their contribution was welcomed at the board and they were able to provide an independent user voice based on extensive surveys and consultation.

10.4   Twitter was used during the meeting which proffered a few comments from members of the public but by this point it was too late to follow up at the meeting.

10.5   Facebook was also used to gather questions from the public, but again this was too close to the meeting to get real participation.

11   Session 1

How can train connectivity support economic development and business growth in the city?

11.1   Members received presentations from Toby Rackliff, Rail Strategy Manager, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) on rail transport and growth in the West Midlands and Malcolm Holmes, Programme Director, TfWW on West Midlands Rail Devolution. The presentation provided an understanding of West Midlands Rail Ltd, which is a partnership of Local Authorities including the WMCA.

Appendix 1

11.2   The Board raised a number of questions in response to the presentations and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- How would the provision of a train station in Kenilworth be of benefit to passengers at Tile Hill Station when most passengers were travelling to Birmingham

- The importance of the availability of data relating to the modes of transport used by train passengers to arrive at the Coventry train stations

- What steps were being taken to mitigate the impact on local residents of the 15% increase of passengers using Tile Hill and Canley stations

- The suggestion of using other local authority areas as examples of best practice e.g. York Ring and Ride

- Why couldn't proposals for additional trains be introduced immediately

- The current position relating to the electrification of the Coventry Nuneaton line

- Support for the proposals for branding but, in light of the all the different organisations involved in rail services, the requirement for members of the public to be aware of who was accountable for what

- What was happening with the proposals to increase the West Midlands rail track

- The implications of HS2 on the Coventry to London Euston route and how were Coventry commuters expected to benefit from HS2

- Would there be a central link to improve rail freight

- Following the opening of the KNUCKLE station at the Ricoh, were we on schedule to meet usage targets and information on the service level agreement

- Concerns about any potential charging at the rail park and ride sites at Canley and Tile Hill and the implications for residents in light of increasing usage of these stations

- Concerns about the scheduling and timing of train services from Canley to Birmingham and how could the issues around long waits caused by delays and cancellations be addressed

- The potential for light rail to be introduced in Coventry and links with WMG at Warwick University

- The length of rail franchise agreements and what was done to protect services when things started to fail

- The position relating to Virgin Trains and why the operator was so influential

- The latest position relating to the importance of securing rail links between Europe and the West Midlands and, in particular, having HS2 linking to St Pancras, and the need to secure the support of MPs to lobby for this.

12   Session 2

How can we improve the bus service in the city?

12.1   The session started with a brief presentation from David Beer of Passenger Focus who provided information on passenger feedback and the key issues for bus users.

12.2   Members also heard from bus service providers National Express Midlands (Martin Hancock) and Stagecoach (Steve Burd). The key issue for service provides was congestion and road works affecting punctuality and also future developments in contactless ticketing and greener buses.

12.3   Members also heard from Pete Bond and John Hayes from TfWM who talked about the Bus Alliance, network developments including improved ticketing.

12.4 Bridget Harper from Coventry Older Voices provided information on some of the key concerns of older people using public transport which were reliability, access to key services such as health facilities, bus stops, safety and access to information.

12.5 The Board raised a number of questions in response to the presentations and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Developers designing in access for public transport early in large residential developments

- Information on bus times for the visually impaired

- Impact of bus lanes and potential for removal

- Impact on air quality of people travelling on buses rather than in their cars

- Multi-modal ticketing so passengers can use a variety of transport methods, including cars.

- How members of the public raise concerns and complaints – how do they know who to contact.

- Whether suburban bus hubs could be considered to improve access to local area centres.

- Concerns about safety, especially at night

- The bus service to the hospital

- Driver training in customer service.

- Addressing people's concerns over safety and how best to encourage bus travel.

13   Session 3

What are the key accessibility issues for public transport in the city, and how can they be addressed?

13.1 The Scrutiny Board received information on the current provision by the Council on transport provided by the Passenger Transport Service. They also considered information from Coventry Older Voices.

13.2 Members discussed the following issues:-

- The need to investigate the better utilisation of Council vehicles during the day when they are currently not in use by carrying out a review of existing provision available in the City and consulting on what provision is required by people in the City.

- Issues relating to the current Ring and Ride service, particularly in relation to picking up/dropping off at University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire and the current criteria applied to service users.

- Work carried out by the Travel Training Team and the benefits of this work. Consideration of buddy system for older people who have lost confidence or developed mobility issues.

- Cross boundary travel between Warwickshire and the West Midlands and if the West Midlands Combined Authority will provide any opportunities to remove these boundaries

Appendix 1

14   Lessons learned on the process

14.1   Members of the Board held an informal plenary session after the select committee to review the process and identify lesson learned for when a select committee approach is used by scrutiny.

14.2   **Involvement of Cabinet Members**

14.3   Cabinet Members should be fully briefed on the subject of the select committee to enhance their involvement at the meeting and to enable them to engage with recommendations resulting from the select committee.

14.4   **Attendance and substitutions**

14.5   It was agreed that consistency of attendance at briefing sessions enables Members at the meeting to be more informed on the subject area, therefore regular attendance at meetings and avoidance of use of substitutes should be encouraged.

14.6   **Witnesses and Presentations**

14.7   The presentations from witnesses were quite detailed and took up a significant amount of time. It also meant that Members questions were focussed on the content of the presentations rather than the key line of enquiry. It was agreed that in future witnesses should limit themselves to an introduction of their role within the context of the key line of enquiry.

14.8   Members also considered that where there were numerous witnesses, responses to questions became unclear and some questions were lost in the multiple responses.

14.9   For future meetings it was also agreed that Council Officers should be of significant seniority to be able to answer questions on policy development and implementation and where there are gaps in knowledge careful consideration should be made of the use of expert witnesses.

14.10 **Questions**

14.11 When Members asked multiple questions, were digressive or made statements rather than questions, it became difficult for witnesses to respond with clarity and to provide good evidence towards the key lines of enquiry.

14.12 Despite the preparation of questions in advance of the meeting, Members were reluctant to refer to them which resulted in questioning straying from the key lines of enquiry. Members agreed that if they had been submitted in advance of the meetings and they had been themed or grouped together, it could have made the meeting run more smoothly and have elicited more comprehensive evidence from the witnesses.

14.13 **Timings**

14.14 The day was long, with a lot of information to be considered. Members agreed that a morning evidence session with an afternoon plenary would be sufficient.

14.15 **Communications and involvement of the public**

14.16 It was agreed that better communication and publicity before the select committee could have improved public engagement with the process.

14.17 **Ways to improve the process**

      i.   Specific briefings for Cabinet Members by Select Committee Chair and Officers should be held, especially if the themes of the committee span more than one portfolio

      ii. Members on the select committee attend briefing sessions, avoid substitutions and fully familiarise themselves with background briefing papers.

      iii. Presentations from witnesses should be to introduce their role only and not provide additional or new information

iv.   The number of witnesses should be kept to a maximum of three per session

v.   Questions to witnesses should be given one at a time to allow multiple witnesses to respond, and should be limited to 60-90 seconds

vi.   Questions to witnesses should be prepared prior to the meeting by members of the committee, based on background briefing information and themed or grouped together

vii.   Careful consideration of payment to expert witness should be made where there are gaps in knowledge by Council officers

viii.   Council officers who attend as witnesses should be senior officers with responsibility for implementing and managing policy decisions

ix.   The select committee should be consist of a half-day to question witnesses with additional time for a plenary session, so recommendations can be identified on the day.

x.   Social media and other traditional communications are used well in advance of the meeting to enable questions from the public to be considered as part of the process.

15 General Comments

15.1   Members considered that overall the day had been a success and that other scrutiny boards should consider identifying subjects for future select committee.

15.2   Members also wanted to express their thanks to everyone who had been involved in the select committee.

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