

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
SCRUTINY BOARD (6)

30th January 2013

Scrutiny Board (6) and
Substitute Members

Present:-

Councillor Hammon
Councillor Howells (Chair)
Councillor Mulhall
Councillor Noonan
Councillor Sandy (Deputy Chair)
Councillor B Singh
Councillor Skipper

By Invitation:

Councillor McNicholas (Lead Member (Transport))

Cabinet Member Present:-

Councillor Kelly (Cabinet Member (City Development))
Councillor A. Khan (Cabinet Member (Sustainability and Local
Infrastructure))
Councillor J. Mutton (Cabinet Member (Policy, Leadership and
Governance))
Councillor Ruane (Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action
Action, Housing, Leisure and Culture))

Employees Present:-

G. Holmes (Chief Executive's Directorate)
L. Knight (Customer and Workforce Services Directorate)
M. Waters (City Services and Development Directorate)

Others Present:

G. Craddock (Centro)
A. Harding (Centro)

Apologies:-

Councillor Lancaster

38. Declarations of Interest

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

39. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 28th November 2012 were agreed as a true record.

Further to Minute 33/12, the Chief Executive advised the Board that a report on the changes to Council Tax had been considered by the Cabinet and Council on 8th January and 15th January 2013, respectively.

40. **Bus Network Update**

Guy Craddock and Andrew Harding from Centro, provided the Board with an update on various matter in relation to the bus network, and the impact within Coventry.

In particular, they reported on the following matters:

- Statistical information in respect of passenger satisfaction surveys, reliability and punctuality.
- Progress made on establishing a Coventry area 'multi operator ticket' - it was anticipated that the ticket, branded as 'n-bus' would be launched in April 2013.
- Success of 'at stop cleaning' carried out as buses arrived in Pool Meadow.
- Commitment by operators for continued investment in their vehicles and discussion with Centro in order to identify which routes the new buses would operate on. It was acknowledged that this investment in newer, more modern vehicles would also contribute to a reduction in emissions and help to improve the standards of air quality across the region.
- The opening of the new entrance / exit from Hales Street into Pool Meadow – scheduled for Monday 11th February 2013 as a result of a delay arising from recent bad weather and rescheduling of roadworks on Fairfax Street.
- Feasibility work being carried out in order to try to improve arrangements on Trinity Street for passengers, bus operators and other highway users.
- Progress on the development of a City Centre Wayfinding project, based on the experience in Birmingham. EU funding had been secured which would permit an overall approach and strategy to be prepared and initial phase of works to be implemented.
- An Access Strategy has been prepared by UHCW NHS Trust and a planning application had been submitted to the Council for the proposed measures to improve access to the University Hospital Coventry site. A circulation system was proposed for buses that would be largely segregated from cars and a new, larger bus interchanged developed. It was hoped that this would eliminate the current erratic and frequently delayed services at the site and would encourage more staff, visitors and patients to use the bus and that operators would be more inclined to improve links to the Hospital.
- It was noted that the Bus Network Review was implemented in February 2012 and that there had been further development of the network since that date to help address outstanding issues, including the extension of Service 1, progression of plans to develop a City Circle; and the intention to extend the Service 20A.

Members of the Board identified a number of issues on services both within their own wards and across the City generally and sought advice from Centro on how issues should be reported in order for a response to be received from the appropriate operator. It was recommended that all issues, complaints or concerns be reported directly to Centro customer relations so that they may keep a log of incidents and pass the information on to the relevant operator. Customer relations could be contacted either by email at customerrelations@centro.org.uk or by telephone on 0121 214 7214.

The Board also sought information in respect of measure undertaken to address the issue of vandalism of bus shelters. Guy Craddock indicated that, depending on the level of vandalism experienced, there were a number of options that could be implemented, such as the installation of CCTV in shelters and also the use of a new 'mesh' sided shelter which was much more resistant to vandalism.

With regard to punctuality, the Board requested information on the various causes of delays on services and how these may be addressed. They were advised that the major issue in respect of delays was traffic congestion, over which they had little control. However, bus operators were also licensed by the Traffic Commissioner and were monitored to ensure that they were providing an efficient service and if it were found that operators were not maintaining an efficient service the license could be withdrawn. This encouraged operators to run punctual services, although it was acknowledged that on occasions, due to external factors, this wasn't always possible.

The Board thanked Centro for attending the meeting and providing an update on the bus network, particularly as they were not required to share this information with the Board, and indicated that this showed a commitment to improving the service for the citizens of Coventry.

RESOLVED that the latest position in relation to the bus network be noted.

41. **Rail Story**

The Board considered a briefing note from the Chief Executive and received a presentation by the Director of City Services and Development on the Rail Story for Coventry.

The presentation was based around the ambition that Coventry has for its future economy and the major factor that connectivity would play in supporting this economy. It was acknowledged that Coventry's existing rail connectivity was a significant and well used asset and a key selling point for the City. However, there was a need to build and improve on existing facilities and there were likely to be both threats and opportunities arising from proposals for both HS2 and HLOS (electric spine).

A number of statistics were provided in respect of the current use of Coventry Station for journeys to London and to other cities, the growth experienced in the last decade, and the required growth over the next 25 years.

The Board were also shown maps which identified the proposed route for HS2 and the reduced travel times anticipated to key locations around the country from the Birmingham Interchange, as well as the opportunities to connect more efficiently with other cities as a result of the HLOS proposals.

The presentation also identified the existing connectivity compared with projected connectivity in 2019 through HLOS and in 2026 as a result of both HLOS and HS2.

In terms of what Coventry was doing for itself, the Board were advised that all opportunities for the best connectivity to the HS2 Birmingham Interchange were being assessed; that there was market lead analysis behind rail opportunities; HLOS-enabled economic opportunities were being examined; opportunities to add value to HLOS on a local network were being identified and options for Coventry Station were being considered.

Having considered the issues identified within the presentation, the Board acknowledged the Council's current position in respect of HS2 but recognised that there was a need to plan for the future development of the rail network serving Coventry and the surrounding area, including opportunities to ensure that Coventry is linked closely to the Birmingham HS2 Interchange and that key links to London stations are maximised through the use of the HLOS.

It was further acknowledged that there needed to be further work undertaken in order to fully understand the passenger usage of stations, including Coventry and Birmingham New Street, and the interaction of passengers between both of these stations, in order to push for further investment locally.

RESOLVED that, whilst noting the Council's current position on HS2, they recognise the need to plan for the future development of the rail network which serves Coventry and the local area and would welcome a further debate at an appropriate time

42. **Work Programme 2012/13**

The Scrutiny Board noted the current Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2012/13 and gave consideration to further items for inclusion.

It was agreed to add 'Rail Story' to the work programme for a further update in due course.

43. **Outstanding Issues**

The Scrutiny Board noted that all outstanding issues had been incorporated into their work programme for the Municipal Year (Minute 42 above refers).

44. **Meeting Evaluation**

The Scrutiny Board commented on the high quality of the presentations they had received.

44. **Any other public business**

There were no other items of urgent public business.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 a.m.