

Scrutiny Committee

Venue: Committee Room 2

Date: 27 July 2011

Present: Councillor Mrs W Nichols (Chair), Councillor I Chilvers, Councillor M Dyson, Councillor K Ellis, Councillor C Pearson, Councillor D Peart and Councillor R Price

Apologies for Absence: Councillor M Hobson

Also Present: Councillor Mrs D Davies, Councillor J McCartney, Councillor Mrs M McCartney, Councillor C Metcalfe, Councillor R Packham, Richard Owens (NYCC Passenger Transport Team), Stuart Bear and Michael Watson (Arriva)

Officers Present: Jonathan Lund, Deputy Chief Executive; Karen Iveson, Executive Director; Rose Norris, Director of Communities Selby; Sarah Smith, Business Manager (for agenda item 4); Richard Besley and Karen Mann, Democratic Services

6. Minutes

RESOLVED:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 21 June 2011 and they are signed by the Chair.

7. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8. Chair's Address to the Scrutiny Committee

The Chair welcomed councillors to the meeting and informed Councillors

the Committee had received a Call-In, that would be discussed as the final item of business as a Part 2 item.

9. Scrutiny Report S/11/1 – Call-In Executive Decision E/11/6 Selby College Sports Pitch Report Back

The Executive Director (S151) informed the Committee that the matter on the above report went back to the Executive meeting on 7 July with the recommendation from Scrutiny that report E/11/6 be reconsidered.

After consideration the Executive reaffirmed its original decision and the report was agreed.

10. Scrutiny Report S/11/4 – Transport Provision (April 2011 Round of Cuts to Bus Services and Impact on Communities)

The Chair welcomed the visitors, Richard Owens (NYCC Passenger Transport Team), Stuart Bear and Michael Watson (Arriva).

The Chair asked that Councillors put their submitted questions first, allowing follow on questions to follow.

Councillor Dyson raised a question on Funding / subsidies. Richard Owens, NYCC, updated that the County Council team had looked at services and providers and at areas available for subsidy.

Councillor Pearson raised a question about Sunday bus services on Bank Holidays. Arriva informed the Committee that Sundays and Bank Holidays did not attract subsidies from NYCC and that the Company could not operate a commercial service when subsidy was unavailable.

Mr Watson (Arriva Area Manager) was not aware of Selby's Bank Holiday markets and Councillors confirmed that the majority of shops were open in the town centre on a Bank Holiday. Richard Owens (NYCC) will discuss the Bank Holiday provision with Arriva.

Councillors felt that should a reduced service be continued consideration should be given to "peak" times.

Councillors were concerned that cuts to bus services seemed to go against national policy with the Government encouraging the use of public transport and asked if further cuts were being considered?

Councillor Packham highlighted the Selby/Leeds service via Sherburn was used by people going to and from work. Councillor Packham asked if there were any options available for NYCC to look at re-instatement of services?

Arriva confirmed that cuts were not taken lightly and part of the new area manager's remit was to look at encouraging bus use and promoting bus services. He confirmed a wish to talk with NYCC further. Prior to the cuts Arriva looked at everything that was a commercial liability however they would be willing to work with NYCC to look at re-instatement of services as long as they were viable.

They will maintain their promotion through adverts and literature but would like to work with the Council at targeting community groups.

Mr Owens (NYCC) confirmed that Parish/Local services are available but difficult to maintain. It costs around £40 an hour to run a bus, so a service is dependent on full fare paying customers.

Mr Owens felt that Arriva had acted responsibly as some of the services cut, including Selby/Leeds had poor patronage, with single occupancy figures and that the first journey out of Selby had been part funded by the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (WYPTE).

In response to the questions set by Councillor Price, Mr Watson (Arriva) confirmed that before the cuts Arriva were a growing business and continued to improve service delivery. Punctuality is currently the highest it has been and refurbishment of vehicles is high on their agenda. They could close the Selby depot and support the area out of other depots with a loss of 100 jobs but that is not their wish. The process they went through involved working with staff to maintain the business.

For young people, Arriva offer discount tickets to students at Selby College, and to support leisure activities there is the Xscape bus service, though Councillor Price was concerned that that service was unavailable to young people living in the south of the district.

On the matter of an initiative introduced in Whitby, Mr Owens informed the Committee that the service was supported by a fare supplement to the user of £2.00. Though the service had not been used greatly, there has now been a reduction in the supplement to £1.00 and it is hoped passenger numbers will improve.

Both Arriva and NYCC are keen to support services but they will be affected by lack of usage and if people can park in Selby for 50p rather than pay £1.00 on a bus they are going to continue to drive.

The Chair welcomed the work of Arriva and the North Yorkshire County Council's Transport Provision Team in promoting services and thanked the speakers for attending. He urged all parties to work with tenants, residents and CEFs to advertise and interact with our communities.

RESOLVED:

To receive and note the report.

11. New Homes Bonus – Work Programme Item

The Chair asked that this item be placed on the Work Programme for the next meeting.

The Executive Director explained that New Homes Bonus (NHB) is based on growth in the Council's tax base from new homes etc. The committee need to establish where this growth is and should consider whether any infrastructure could be improved.

The Committee will consider the NHB Scheme and put options forward to the Executive for them to consider.

The Chair agreed that Councillors consider the impact in their own Wards.

The Executive Director, with officers, will prepare a background paper on NHB. The Chair asked the Committee to gather information of growth within their own Wards and to feed back to the Executive Director by the end of August any information gathered so the information can be circulated prior to the next meeting on 20 September 2011.

12. Scrutiny Work Programme

New Homes Bonus will be added to the September meeting and it was agreed to invite representatives from North Yorkshire Police to attend the item on Crime and Disorder.

The Democratic Services officer informed the Committee that the MP, Nigel Adams, had been invited to attend the November meeting as per Work Programme. However, as the House would be in session it would be unlikely he could attend. It was agreed to explore the possibility of setting up a video conference link with Mr Adams. The Democratic Services officer to arrange.

It was agreed by the Committee to move into Private Session to discuss the Call-In item.

13. Private Session

Resolved: In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the following item as there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information.

14. Report S/11/5 Call-In Executive Decision E/11/15 – Review of Countryside Management

Executive decision **E/11/15** called-in by Scrutiny was discussed and Executive Member, Councillor C Metcalfe attended the meeting, along with Executive Director, Rose Norris and Business Manager, Sarah Smith.

The Committee were given the opportunity to question the Executive Member and Business Manager as well as hear the views of Councillor J McCartney, who had initiated the call-in.

RESOLVED:

- i. To receive and note report S/11/5;**
- ii. Executive Decision E/11/15 – Review of Countryside Management is a valid call-in;**
- iii. That Scrutiny Committee endorse Executive Decision E/11/15 – Review of Countryside Management, of 7 July 2011;**
- iv. To place Countryside Management onto the Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm.