

**QUESTIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TO THE TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
06/01/21**

Item 2.1 Performance and Finance Report

The budget report under the Budget and Performance Update shows that £2,924.4k has been transferred to the Highways authorities under the Capital Budget 3.5 for the Active Travel Grant payments to Highways Authorities.

- 1) What was the split of the money between Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council?
- 2) Is it the CPCA's responsibility to report the detail of this spend to Central Government?
- 3) What updates have been received from CCC and PCC about the details of the spend to date?

RESPONSE

- 1) The split of the grant is PCC £800k, CCC £2,142.4k
- 2) Yes- As the Combined Authority received the funding, it will be up to us to submit the required reporting per the Monitoring and Evaluation requirements and the grant funding requirements back to DfT.
- 3) PCC and CCC are currently undertaking feasibility of the schemes proposed in the original bid and we await final viability, buildability and affordability in due course.

Item 2.9 Buses Strategy Update

Given the COVID pandemic and the subsequent reduction in bus usage, how will the CPCA measure the outcome from the DRT trial?

Paragraph 2.9 of the report states that negotiations with a range of DRT providers is ongoing and a briefing of the DRT plan will be provided at Committee.

Could a copy of that plan be provided to the O & S committee?

RESPONSE

Work has been taking place to procure a trial state of the art Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service in west Huntingdonshire.

The work needed to do this is proceeding well but clearly we need to understand the Tier restrictions brought on by Covid-19 in order to select the optimum time to commence delivery.

In this trial we will be looking carefully at the passenger numbers for the DRT service compared to the existing bus services in the area which will continue as a benchmark. We have the data for passengers on these services in 2019 and 2020, and also have county-wide data for each period and this will enable us to extrapolate the impact of DRT on the underlying bus network. In addition we wish to do some on-bus survey work of passengers to establish qualitative views of the new service.

The data gathered within the trial will be comparable with data currently provided for existing bus services and the comparison can be made against pre covid and covid passenger numbers. We have details of how many passengers travelled on buses in west Hunts in 2019 and 2020; and for all services in the CPCA area. Hence we will be able to calculate the expected downturn in passengers due to Covid and whether numbers are improved by the DRT service's greater availability and connectivity.

However there are genuine concerns about the messaging from central Government. The messaging in relation to the safety of bus transport will be critical in determining the optimum time to commence the trial and dedicated PR and marketing will be in place. Very clearly this is not a moment when we can say that the trial can be safely launched.

In terms of the plan being shared with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee officers will work with Democratic Services.

At present the plan remains to deploy 4 to 6 small buses and minibuses on a network running 6 days a week, serving west Huntingdonshire within an area defined by the county boundary west of St Neots: the A428 from St Neots to Caxton Gibbet: the A1198 from there towards the new A14/A1(M) up to Sawtry; and then round the county boundary to near Thrapston. Maps have been prepared for this entire area; all roads have been driven and their suitability assessed, and all the DRT pick up zones have been recorded in line with Traffic Commissioner requirements. The tender is ready to send out and we await a significant downturn in the virulence of the virus to allow tendering to formally commence.

The budget for this trial will carry forward with the service to commence as soon as possible.