

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Environment and Transportation

approval  noting

Ref NP/AR

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## Member Officer Working Group Transport Outcome Report

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### Executive Summary

This report details the work of the Member Officer Working Group Transport. The report identifies opportunities to slow the decline in bus patronage and proposes the development of the community transport sector to encourage additional services and providers in North Lanarkshire.

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### Recommendations

It is recommended that the Environment and Transportation Committee:

- (1) Note the work of the Member Officer Working Group and the contents of the report.
- (2) Approve that the Head of Environmental Assets works with SPT and bus operators on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership along the Coatbridge-Airdrie-Plains corridor.
- (3) Approve that the council targets the development of community transport as a way of enhancing local communities travel options.

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### Supporting Documents

#### Council business plan to 2020

Improve economic opportunities and outcomes by linking homes with employment opportunities.

Support all children to realise their full potential by providing opportunities to access education, training and employment.

Improve health and care of communities by providing access to health care facilities.

Improve relationships with communities and the third sector by working together.

#### Appendix 1

#### Terms of Reference

## 1. Background

- 1.1 At the Council meeting on 29 March 2018 the Council decided to set up a Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) to investigate the feasibility and direction of a Council run transport network being developed to service the council area.
  - 1.2 The MOWG has met several time to explore the options and has now completed its investigations.
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## 2. Report

- 2.1 The terms of reference (Appendix 1) were set to ensure that the remit of the group was wide ranging and included reviewing transportation as a whole. The MOWG explored three themes; the proposed Transport Bill, the existing transport network and opportunities to enhance travel options.

### Proposed Transport Bill

- 2.2 The Transport Bill is currently progressing through the Scottish Parliament. Within the bill there are there changes that would directly impact on provision of Bus services.
  - **Bus Service Improvement Partnerships**  
These have the potential to deliver improvements to the bus market. However, there are challenges for authorities in developing a scheme, particularly in areas with multiple operators, that would deliver benefits whilst keeping all the operators engaged in the process.
  - **Bus Franchising**  
A number of hurdles have to be cleared in preparation for franchising, a framework has to be prepared and assessed, an auditor's report is required and the approval of a panel. Franchising would be costly and time consuming to set up and establish, it is untried in the UK outside of London. Manchester have allocated £11 million to undertake the initial planning work in preparation for franchising. Any franchise agreement would introduce additional risks to the local authority in respect to revenue income achieved from the franchised services.
  - **Provision of Bus Services**  
As North Lanarkshire Council is part of the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) Area any municipal bus service provision would have to be delivered through SPT rather than directly by the council. However, without significant capital and revenue funding from the Government it is unlikely that any local authority will be able to deliver directly run local bus services. The proposals in the bill restricts local authorities to operating services that address a social need, which are those loss making services that commercial operators have abandoned.

## Existing Transport Network

- 2.3 Working with SPT our existing bus network was mapped. There are 1,735 bus stops in NLC with 96% of the population living within 400m of a stop. This shows that there is an effective infrastructure network to deliver services from. When considering the level of service at these stops 31% of residents live close to a turn up and go service with a minimum of 6 buses per hour (between 7am and 7 pm, weekdays); 86% live within 400m of a stop that delivers 1 bus per hour (between 7am and 7 pm, weekdays). However, there are 577 stops that do not have at least 1 bus per hour between 7am and 7pm which affects 14% of our residents. Those communities without adequate bus service coverage are at risk of becoming isolated and cut off from vital services like health care, education and job opportunities.
- 2.4 Bus companies publish timetables that they are legally obliged to run to under the terms of the bus service registration. In areas of congestion operators may have to introduce additional buses to ensure that they can meet their timetable obligations. This increases costs and in some case may make the route no longer viable. The council has introduced Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) with one of the main aims being to tackle congestion in our towns. It is still too earlier to demonstrate that this reduced congestion but it will be continued to be monitored. The council has also introduced bus operator meetings, this is a place for the council, SPT and bus operators to discuss issues that may be affecting efficient operation of services. By holding regular meetings and developing DPE the council is protecting existing services by ensuring efficient operation of the network.
- 2.5 Ongoing engagement with operators is seen as key to maintaining services, it is also recognised that services are not contained within the council boundaries but that we have strong links with neighbouring authorities. We will continue to work with SPT and bus operators to try to deliver a Bus Service Improvement Partnership trailing the Coatbridge-Airdrie-Plains corridor. Developing working alliances with neighbouring authorities were possible. This will aim to prevent the decline in bus patronage; deliver a comprehensive network; maximise performance and standards; integrate and promote the network.

## Opportunities to Enhance Travel Options

- 2.6 The MOWG heard presentations from two groups that identified areas for future development. NHS Lanarkshire on the Transport Hub Pilot and Getting Better Together Community Transport on the services that they are delivering within the community.
- 2.7 The NHS Lanarkshire pilot involved SPT operating a contact centre to allocate all of the requests for transport raised within the health board. These requests were then allocated to SPT vehicles, NLC fleet, GBT and other third sector partners before considering the use of taxis. The pilot proved the concept that working with alternative suppliers did deliver savings and improved services to clients. NHS Lanarkshire will now look to develop a contact centre to deliver this in the future, NLC will continue to offer the use spare capacity in the council fleet. Other service within the council that rely on the use of taxis should be encourage to use the contact centre when it has been established.
- 2.8 Getting Better Together (GBT) Community Transport (CT) is a service that has grown from GBT, Shotts Healthy Living Centre. GBT CT now completes

approximately 30,000 passenger journeys per year. This delivers a lifeline for many isolated and lonely individuals who use GBT CT to access social activities, health services, support groups, therapies and family events.

- 2.9 Given the success of working with the third sector and CT groups the MOWG consider that the way forward is to develop and strengthen this area.
- 2.10 CT is a safe, accessible, cost effective, flexible transport service run by the community for the community. CT can provide a range of service covering mini bus and car schemes. They are not for profit organisations that can take many forms that deliver services through a mix of volunteers and paid staff. SPT have worked in developing this sector across Strathclyde and there are currently 63 CT operators.
- 2.11 We would look to the local communities to help themselves with support from the council and SPT. CT is designed and developed by the community to provide for an identified community need. It provides services that are available, accessible, affordable and addresses community safety and security concerns. CT can cover multiple areas; community car schemes, minibus journeys, hospital transport and access to work. To set up a CT scheme you need local volunteers to run and manage the service as well as drivers and assistants. You can start of small and build the membership and serviced being delivered. You don't need to buy a mini bus, you can contact existing CT operators and hire a bus and a driver or a volunteer car scheme may be more appropriate as the scheme grows.
- 2.12 It is proposed that North Lanarkshire host a digital community providing a place for local communities that are interested in CT to get together share ideas and see what other communities are delivering. There are a number of CT operators in North Lanarkshire one of the biggest is GBT and they would be willing to work with new groups to see if they can use some of the services they currently provide, to develop new service or to hire a bus and a driver.
- 2.13 There are a number of other services that would be signposted from the digital community and they would include the MyBus service delivered by STP. This is a bookable demand responsive service which covers a number of areas across the council. MyBus covers Wishaw/Shotts (M19), Cumbernauld (M90), Motherwell (M98), Monklands (M99) and North Lanarkshire (R400). Contact details for other CT provides and services that they provide would also be included.
- 2.14 NLC and SPT working together can also assist in training, maintenance and access to funding.

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### **3. Equality and Diversity**

#### **3.1 Fairer Scotland**

At this stage the Fairer Scotland Duty does not apply

#### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact assessment will be undertaken as initiatives are developed that support the views in the report.

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#### **4. Implications**

##### **4.1 Financial Impact**

There are no additional financial impacts. The development of digital communities is included within the Digital NL work stream and the support proposed is already in place and funded. There may be an increased demand for funding but this can be managed by the various providers.

##### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

None

##### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

Improvements to services that encourage more shared travel options will have a beneficial impact on the environment.

##### **4.4 Risk Impact**

No significant risks have been identified.

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#### **5. Measures of success**

5.1 Reduce the decline in bus patronage and increase the number of services within North Lanarkshire

5.2 A thriving third sector that is contributing to the movement of passengers across the council area.

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**Nicole Paterson**  
**Head of Environmental Assets**

## **Appendix 1 Terms of Reference**

Investigate the feasibility and direction of a council run transport network being developed within a wider transport network to serve North Lanarkshire.

This will include but not restricted to;

- a review of the existing provision
- consideration of alternative solutions
- opportunities that may be part of the emerging Transport Bill
- development of preferred options
- assessment of any environmental and social impact