

**Report to:** Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012  
**Portfolio:** Planning and Transportation, Cllr Miles Parkinson  
**Report Author:** Chief Planning and Transportation Officer  
**Title of Report:** Bus Trips to the Seaside

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To allow Overview and Scrutiny to consider the issues associated with the provision of subsidized bus trips to the seaside. The specification for the service is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To allow Overview and Scrutiny to consider whether the Council should continue to provide subsidized bus trips to the seaside.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Overview and Scrutiny consider whether the Council should continue to provide this service and to advise members and officers accordingly.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 For a number of years the Council has been providing subsidized bus trips to the seaside for residents of Hyndburn. In 2011, a 50 seat coach undertook 54 trips to Blackpool and Fleetwood between 3<sup>rd</sup> May and 25<sup>th</sup> August, providing a total of 2,700 return trips. The service ran a Tuesday local pickup service, a Wednesday Express service picking up only at Accrington Bus Station, and a Thursday local pickup service. There was also a Bank Holiday local pickup service operated.
- 3.2 The service was funded through the Cabinet Action fund and a budget of £15,000<sup>1</sup> was made available. The actual cost in 2011 was £9,711, not including officer time. Passengers with a Nowcard were expected to pay £1. In 2011 the successful tenderer was Rigby's Coaches based in Altham.
- 3.3 The reason for organising the trips was to provide subsidized return transport to Blackpool and Fleetwood for Nowcard holders.
- 3.4 It is estimated that the organisation of the service involved approximately 20 hours of officer time, most of this concerned with the tendering process. The Council undertook no monitoring of the trips.
- 3.5 A number of issues arose:

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<sup>1</sup> In 2010 the cost was approx £15,000.

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- The capacity of the bus/coach. Provision of the service was based on a first-come first-served basis and once the bus/coach was full no further passengers were allowed on. The service was popular and for this reason there were occasions when people were left standing at the bus stop. This problem could be addressed by allowing people to pre-book seats through the bus/coach company. This would prevent the disappointment of not getting a seat on the day of travel.
- An issue also arose concerning Nowcards issued by Lancashire County Council, a driver refusing to accept a passenger on this basis although the passenger was a resident of the Borough. The guidelines on this would need to be clarified.

3.6 The service effectively operated as a private charter. The Council has no statutory requirement to provide services of this type, the decision to provide the service suggested by the former Leader of the Council, Cllr Britcliffe.

#### 4. Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 To allow Overview and Scrutiny to freely consider whether the Council should continue to provide this service.

#### 5. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 Not to provide the service. The service was approved by Members.

#### 6. Implications

Issue	Comments
<b>Financial (including mainstreaming)</b>	The cost is set out in the report.
<b>Legal (including Human Rights issues)</b>	N/A. This is not a statutory Requirement.
<b>Assessment of Risk</b>	Subject to appropriate tendering process and checks being made on the company that is successful.
<b>Equality and Diversity</b> <i>Officers should carry out a "Customer First Analysis" to ensure that all services and policies meet the diverse needs of its residents and other service users. What were the key outcomes from your Customer First Analysis?</i>	This would be undertaken at the time. The specification requires provision to be made for disabled access.
<b>Key Decision</b> <i>Only applicable for Cabinet decisions.</i>	N/A. Not a Cabinet Decision.

#### 7. Consultations

7.1 None.

**8. Links to Corporate Priorities**

Priority	Comments
<b>Corporate Governance And Customer Focus</b>	Considered at the time funding was approved for the service.
<b>Safer Communities</b>	
<b>Strong &amp; Balanced Housing Market</b>	
<b>Thriving Economy</b>	
<b>Safeguarding the Environment</b>	
<b>Valuing Diversity</b>	
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	
<b>Healthier Living</b>	

**9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:  
List of Background Papers**

None

**10. Freedom of Information**

10.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**11. Exempt Report**

11.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972.

## **Appendix 1. Summer Coach Services Specification**

### **Services to be provided**

The Council is seeking to provide summer bus services to tourist destinations for its residents, predominantly but not exclusively NoWcard pass holders. It is proposed to start the service on the Mayday Bank Holiday (3<sup>rd</sup> May) and then on every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, until ending on August Bank Holiday Monday (30<sup>th</sup> August). This equates to 53 trips to destinations given on the attached schedule.

The service will start at 09.30 at Byron Close in Oswaldtwistle and then call at the following stops before proceeding via most direct motorway or A roads route to the given destination.

Oswaldtwistle - Byron Close  
Oswaldtwistle - Library  
Accrington - Little Blackburn Road  
Clayton-le-moors - Hare and Hounds  
Great Harwood – Holgate Street  
Rishton – Harwood Road

The service should return by the reverse route as the outward service leaving at approx. 18.00 hrs. Passengers should be notified of the time and locations of the pick up points for the return trips. Mystery trip destinations should be agreed in advance with the Council and should be of a similar duration and cost as the planned trips.

### **Standard of service**

The vehicle provided should be capable of seating at least 50 passengers and should provide suitable access for the elderly and disabled. Ideally the bus/coach should be air conditioned. Operators should supply details of the vehicles they intend to use with their tender.

### **Costs**

Operators should provide the minimum operating cost of each trip together with the full fare it proposes to charge a non subsidised passenger. The Council will expect NoWcard holders to pay £1.00 towards the fare and the Council will make up the difference to the full fare provided.

Operators will be expected to provide monthly statements of the total number of passengers on the services that month together with the number of NoWcard holders along with their NoWcard number. Mystery shoppers may be used on selected services to verify numbers.

In the event that the fares collected for all trips do not cover the minimum total cost of operation quoted in the tender the Council will make a payment of the difference between the minimum total operating cost quoted and the sum of the fares collected (including the subsidy for NoWcard holders.).

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### **Tendering procedure**

Tenderers should complete the enclosed schedule with the minimum operating cost per trip, the total costs and the full fare per trip completed and this should be returned, along with the details of the vehicles to be used and any other supporting information, in the envelope provided by the date given in the covering letter. The return envelope should not contain any mark to identify the tenderer.

Late tenders and tenders not complying with the above will not be considered.