

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION  
BOARD  
WAS HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2015**

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (ex-officio) Burgess (P), Chegwyn (P), Hicks, Hook (Chairman) (P), Jessop (P), Langdon (P), Philpott (P), Ronayne (P), Mrs Wright (P) and Wright (P)

**35. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received from the Mayor and Councillor Hicks.

**36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**37. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**38. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PART II**

**39. BUS SERVICES – CROSS REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Consideration was given to a cross reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Report of the Bus Services Working Group.

The Vice Chairman advised that he had had been involved with bus services in his role as a County Councillor and as Ward Councillor for Lee East and that he met with the Managing Director of First Bus.

He recognised that the Report was well written and that it was easy to read.

The Board were advised that the main issues with buses surrounded services number 9, 11 and 21. The number 9 had been amended slightly through Grange and Rowner but the suggestion to redirect through Bridgemary had not been taken up.

It had been requested that the number 21 continues to provide a service to allow the residents of Lee on the Solent to access Fareham via Newgate Lane and that a number 11 Saturday service continue to serve the residents of Bridgemary and Clayhall.

The Vice Chairman advised that he had attended the Environment Select Committee meeting of Hampshire County Council and been advised that

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subsidy funding of £4,500 for the number 11 Saturday service and £5,500 for the 21 service covering Lee-on-the-Solent would be cut.

It was proposed at the meeting and the Committee had agreed that the funding for these services should not be cut, but the Executive Member for Transport had decided against this.

The Vice-Chairman advised that he had approached the Leader of Gosport Borough Council to see whether the Council could support the retention of the cut bus services in any way.

Although subsidy funding of £5,500 to the 21 service had been cut, resulting in the service no longer covering Lee-on-the-Solent, it was subsequently advised that to reinstate the Lee-on-the-Solent element of the service a subsidy of £19,000 would be required. This was as a result of the route being amended so that the reintroduction of the route to include Lee-on-the-Solent would now require an additional bus, leading to an increase in the subsidy required.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that First Bus were required to run services as a commercial operation at a profit and that unsustainable routes could not operate. This was why subsidy had been required to operate certain routes. It was acknowledged that the Working Group had worked hard to ensure that they had maximum influence over the routes, but that the Council had no direct decision making powers regarding bus services.

It was recognised that the Vice-Chairman and County Councillor Cully had worked hard at a County level to protect services, but that a subsidy of £19,000 was beyond the capability of Gosport Borough Council to support. It was felt however that it could be possible to provide a subsidy to support the retention of the number 11 Saturday service.

Members acknowledged the importance of services to residents. It was acknowledged that previously services had been under used but had been able to be retained ensuring that vital services remained in place to get passengers to work.

Concern was expressed that the views of the Transport Select Committee had been ignored and that services to residents in Fareham had been preserved and rerouted to shorten journey time, whilst the residents of Lee-on-the-Solent had been subjected to large levels of cuts in service in previous years.

Members supported the retention of the Saturday number 11 services as it was the only service that travelled directly along Fareham Road. Concern was expressed that a report detailing the reinstatement of the number 11 Saturday service had been in the local newspaper before consideration had been given to it by the Council.

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It was also requested that following the release of central government funding figures, and in response to Gosport Borough Council's grant being cut by 6% and the County Council's grant being increased by 2.4% that the County Council reconsider their decision to cut the subsidy to the service.

Members were advised that should a decision be made at this meeting that Gosport Borough Council could support the reintroduction of the number 11 Saturday service, the service could be reinstated between 4 and 8 weeks. Any delay would mean that it may then take longer to reinstate.

Members acknowledged that the County Council had supported bus services in the Borough by investing millions of pounds in the Eclipse service, which was an excellent service but expressed concern that this was at the expense of other services that the elderly and disabled relied on. They also accepted that bus routes had to make a profit.

A Member expressed concern that changes to routes were occurring every 6 months and that confusion surrounding bus timetables led to a reduction in use of services. Concern was also expressed that a large number of late night services had been cut, reducing the services available to passengers using bus services to commute to and from work, forcing people to use cars to travel. It was felt that the changing of timetables led to a reduction in passenger confidence in services, which subsequently led to a reduction in use.

Members agreed that they did not want any proposal to support the reinstatement of the number 11 Saturday service to be viewed that Gosport Borough Council had ability to support all services cut by the County Council.

Members reiterated the success of the Eclipse service, but felt that the success should not be at the expense of other services.

Members recognised that cuts had been made to bring the concessionary fare service in line with the national scheme as free concessionary travel was no longer available between 09.00 and 09.29 on weekdays and the importance of the concessionary scheme to its users.

It was proposed and seconded that Gosport Borough Council subsidise the number 11 Saturday service. It was proposed that the service be supported for two years to allow for continuity and allow customers to use and benefit from a consistent service.

Members welcomed the support it would provide to residents, including those in Juniper Court, Fareham Road and Tukes Avenue, who could not walk the distance to the Eclipse, it was felt this would provide a lifeline to residents on a Saturday, Members recognised the importance of the service to the prosperity of the whole Borough.

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It was requested that a letter be written to the County Council requesting that consideration be given to reinstating their subsidy of the service in light of the recent central government funding announcement.

**RESOLVED:** That:

- The Policy and Organisation Board note the report of the Bus Services Working Group and thank Councillors and Officers for the work undertaken; and
- It be agreed to subsidise the Route 11 Saturday Service up to £4, 500 per annum for two years to ensure continuity of service on a Saturday.

#### **40. STAFFING REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief executive recommending the creation of the new post of Technical Officer within the Streetscene section of the Chief Executive's Unit.

In answer to a Member's question, the Board were advised that position would be advertised on a County wide job portal and that the interviews would most likely be undertaken by the Head of Streetscene.

**RESOLVED:** That the creation of a new post, Technical Officer Grade 6, (subject to Job Evaluation) be approved with immediate effect.

#### **41. ANY OTHER ITEMS**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 18:28

**CHAIRMAN**