

Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	10 March 2021
Title of Report:	Public Transport Covid-19 Impact
Lead Member:	Councillor Mark Coker (Cabinet Member Strategic Planning and Infrastructure)
Lead Strategic Director:	Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)
Author:	Debbie Newcombe
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Your Reference:	N/A
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to brief the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact Covid-19 has had on Plymouth's public transport network, and what is required in terms of its recovery.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that the Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public transport provision in Plymouth and the actions that have been taken to support local public transport operators.

Reason: To acknowledge the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public transport in Plymouth.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Lack of partnership working with public transport providers: - We could allow the operators to develop and implement their own recovery strategies, independent from the Council. However, this has been rejected as it would be contrary to advice from Central Government, and could lead to an unstable public transport network which is viewed unsatisfactory by potential service users.

Public transport has been vital to the current response to the COVID-19 emergency and will also be critical to Plymouth's economic recovery. We are a bus based city and it has been, and will be, be our public transport providers who will take our children back to school, our commuters back to work and connect our communities to friends and families – it is essential that we all work together to do everything we can to make sure they are in a position to do so.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The provision of an effective public transport network supports sustainable growth in Plymouth by providing residents and visitors with sustainable transport options to access employment, education, healthcare, leisure and retail opportunities.

Links to the Corporate Plan:-

Growing Plymouth:- Plymouth currently has an extensive public transport network which needs to be retained post-pandemic to ensure that residents and visitors can continue to access all of the services that they need citywide and beyond.

Caring Plymouth:- The public transport network provides valuable links to shops, healthcare, employment, education and leisure. Without these services our residents would face an increased risk of isolation, due to a need to rely on the use of higher cost taxis or relying on the charity and goodwill of friends or family, thereby constraining their independence and impacting on their wellbeing

Links to the Plymouth Plan:-

Through the provision of public transport services the Council supports the use of sustainable transport modes as set out in the Plymouth Plan specifically policies SPT9 (5)5, where it states that the local Planning and Highway Authorities with key stakeholders will deliver: “realistic sustainable transport choices and increasing the integration of transport modes so that people have genuine alternative ways to travel.,” SPT9 (6), which seeks to get the most out of our existing network and encourage behavioural change, SPT9(9) (delivering transport projects which provide a safe and effective transport system) and SPT (10) of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan and policies HEA6 (Delivering a safe, accessible, sustainable and health enabling transport system), GRO4 (Using transport investment to drive growth) and GRO7(Reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change) of the Plymouth Plan.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

There are no additional direct financial implications for the Council at this stage; all payments to be operators (tendered services and concessionary fares) are already budgeted for. Any additional costs incurred to date, over and above those already budgeted for, have been met through the provision of additional funding from Central Government. However, at this stage there is no commitment from Central Government as to how long additional funding will be available to offset the costs of recovery. This could lead to pressure on Council budgets in the event that bus operators start to withdraw bus services but this would require further consideration as the recovery process is worked through.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Managing the demand for car travel and reducing car dependency through still being able to provide a comprehensive network of public transport services will be an essential tool towards improving urban air quality and helping to achieve Climate Emergency Action Plans between now and the 2030 date when net zero carbon is to be achieved, and it therefore essential that the Council works in partnership with our local public transport operators to ensure that this target can be achieved.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

None

Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Public Transport Covid-19 Impact							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
None							

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Paul Barnard, Service Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 23/02/2021											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Mark Coker <i>[electronic signature (or typed name and statement of 'approved by email/verbally')]</i> Date approved: 24/02/2021											