



ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

FEBRUARY 2007

FINAL REPORT –

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN MIDDLESBROUGH

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To present the findings of the Economic Regeneration and Transport Panel's review of Public Transport.

AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

2. The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to undertake a review of the current issues facing public transport in Middlesbrough by considering public expectations and to consider areas for improvement.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

3. The terms of reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:
 - (a) To gain an understanding of the current public transport issues in Middlesbrough.
 - (b) Find out what people's perceptions of public transport are.
 - (c) Establish what people want in terms of public transport and then consider if it can be provided?
 - (d) Consider what can be done to improve the experience for current users and how to encourage non-users to switch to public transport.

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

4. Members of the Panel met formally between 6 September and 7 February to discuss/receive evidence relating to this investigation and a detailed record of the topics discussed at those meetings are available from the Committee Management System (COMMIS), accessible via the Council's website.
5. A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:
 - (a) Detailed officer presentations supplemented by verbal evidence.

(b) Visits to Middlesbrough bus and train stations

(c) Discussions with the public

(d) Discussions with the local bus operators

(e) Information from the Neighbourhood Survey

(f) Information from Sheffield City Council

6. The report has been compiled on the basis of their evidence and other background information listed at the end of the report.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

7. The membership of the Panel was as detailed below:

Councillors J Ismail (Chair), Councillor T Mawston (Vice-Chair), Councillors Bloundele, Hobson, Rehman, Purvis, Rostron, Sanderson and Taylor

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. When the work programme was being developed for the scrutiny panels in 2007, many Members suggested that a review of public transport and in particular bus transport would be welcomed. Members had concerns about the current provision of services, fares, late night and subsidised services etc.
9. Members were aware of the Council's Local Transport Plan 2006-11, which provided a targeted approach to prioritising transport improvements to ensure the achievement of the long-term transport strategy and priorities. The Mayor had also undertaken a detailed consultation exercise in order to find out people's concerns about transport issues in the town. Those findings shaped the four priority outcomes for Middlesbrough's Local Area Agreement for transport.
1. Promoting economic growth and regeneration by providing accessibility improvements
 2. Reducing the number of accidents and casualties
 3. Reducing the number of journeys made by cars
 4. Encourage investment to deliver public transport improvements to reverse declining patronage.
10. With that in mind the panel wanted to consider what was achievable in terms of the Council's role in improving public transport and how people could be encouraged to use alternative forms of transport than the car.

Britain's reliance on Car Use

11. In September 2007 Edmund King, executive director of the RAC Foundation, told the Liberal Democrat Autumn conference that Britain remained car-dependent. Mr. King claimed that the car was the vehicle of choice for commuters, business travellers and shoppers, because it combined convenience and flexibility and that 93 per cent of passenger journeys and 67 per cent of freight movements took place on the roads. Research by the RAC Foundation concluded that only those people

already using public transport were prepared to use it more and those who have never tried travelling by bus had not been persuaded to do so.

12. The research covered the period from 1993 to 2005 and showed that the percentage of the population with a valid driving licence rose from 67 per cent to 72 per cent and with further increases being predicted, particularly in the number of women drivers. Half the population had never used a bus and only seven per cent of people cycled regularly.
13. Mr. King said, "The UK was still a car-dependent nation. Cars could be used less and we could be smarter about tele-working, home shopping and teleconferencing but the car would continue to be the workhorse of the economy. Cycling and walking had a part to play in tackling congestion but they were only ever going to be a realistic prospect for a small percentage of business journeys."

THE PANEL'S FINDINGS

TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES IN MIDDLESBROUGH

14. In order to begin receiving information on this subject, in the first instance, the panel spoke to the Head of Transport and Design Services
15. The panel learnt that in general the area was 'well bussed' in comparison with other areas in that, as an urban area, the town received bus services from buses coming from other nearby towns and passing through Middlesbrough, thus providing services that Middlesbrough residents benefited from. The core routes were successful and where routes were withdrawn it was in areas where the bus operators did not think that they were commercially viable. For bus operators the commercial viability of the route was the first and foremost consideration when making the decision to provide services.
16. In Middlesbrough, and indeed around the country, bus passenger numbers were in decline year on year. Although 11 million passenger journeys took place in Middlesbrough the numbers continued to decline. However reductions in bus passenger numbers were set against a very high level of usage when compared with other parts of the Country. In fact, the Transport Journal noted that in Middlesbrough there were 81 bus journeys per person per year per head of population, which put Middlesbrough 16th nationally and 1 position above York.
17. Since bus deregulation in 1985 bus transport in Middlesbrough had been provided by private operators, mainly Stagecoach, Arriva and Leven Valley. The Council did however tender for some subsidised services to supplement the commercial services that provided some early morning, evening and weekend services. At the time of writing the subsidy was £150,000 per annum and the contract was up for renewal in April 2008. Many services crossed district boundaries so a survey was commissioned by the Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) to consider public transport provision across the Tees Valley as a whole. That review led to Stagecoach and Arriva introducing service changes which followed the principles of the Tees Valley Bus Network review. The review also resulted in a Major Bus Scheme bid for £35 million designed to bring about a co-ordinated approach and improve the quality of

the bus network in the Tees Valley. (Further details of the scheme are provided at paragraph 110)

Initiatives to Improve Bus Passenger Numbers

18. During the review the Council was in the process of making the bid to the government for £35 million funding to improve and develop bus services in the Tees Valley. If successful, the money would be used to improve the bus infrastructure, develop bus priority measures and invest in new buses. The bus operators would have to give guarantees about the services they will provide and their quality and frequency.
19. Some areas have Passenger Transport Executives (PTE). Passenger Transport Authorities (PTA) are responsible for setting out a local authority's transport policy and public transport expenditure plans that are implemented by the PTE. PTEs have the power to secure passenger rail services in their areas contracting with the local franchised passenger train operators to provide additional services. They can also subsidise bus services, ensure information is available, provide special-needs transport, provide investment to refurbish local transport systems and offer assistance to passenger groups on the best way to provide, plan and pay for local public transport services. There are seven PTEs in Great Britain, including Nexus that serves the Tyne & Wear region.
20. The panel was informed that there was no PTE in the Tees Valley and it was noted that the Government did not intend on introducing anymore. In the Tees Valley a working group was established through Tees Valley Unlimited. (Tees Valley Unlimited is a partnership of public, private and voluntary bodies which co-ordinates activities, appropriate to a city region level, designed to improve the economic performance of the entire Tees Valley) in order to consider a joined up approach to transport planning.

Improving Information for Bus Passengers

21. The panel was brought up to date with the main issues regarding public transport in Middlesbrough. The panel learnt that there had been a number of recent initiatives that had been introduced in order to improve the information that was provided for passengers.
22. A pilot scheme had been introduced in the Nunthorpe area that involved the introduction of leaflets that promoted the bus routes in that area. It was also designed to simplify diagrams of the routes in order to show residents the options available to them. The leaflet also provided hints and advice to help residents to plan their trip from the Nunthorpe area to fit their personal travel needs.
23. During the pilot scheme, officers had also visited people in their own home to work with them to develop their own personalised travel plan.

Real Time Bus Information

24. On certain routes in Middlesbrough what was known as real time bus information had been introduced. The scheme involved the installation of boxes, mounted on poles above bus stops or in bus shelters. The boxes contained a screen that showed the exact time that the next bus was due to arrive at the stop and where that bus would be going. The boxes were connected electronically to the buses on the routes, so if a service were running late, the screen would show how long it

would be until the bus arrived. That meant that information about delays that could be caused by traffic congestion or accidents for example could be conveyed to waiting passengers. The real time bus information service had been designed to help passengers by improving their experience of bus travel by keeping them informed.

25. The panel raised a concern that the boxes might suffer from vandalism. Officers advised the panel that six displays had been placed at stops during the last 12 months and that there had been no incidents of vandalism. Work was also continuing to allay any safety concerns through the installation of extra CCTV cameras at bus shelters along with additional lighting and robust glass.
26. The system was being installed incrementally across the town, beginning with the main transport corridors in the Town Centre, Linthorpe, Acklam Road and Borough Road. The majority of the buses had now been fitted with the technology to be able to support the initiative and the development of the supporting infrastructure was the responsibility of the Council. Although there had been some technical problems and the bus station did not have real time information, work was still underway to develop the scheme further.

Traveline

27. The panel learnt that Traveline was another method that was available for passengers to be able to access information. Each bus stop had been assigned its own code that was located at each bus stop. Passengers were able to use their mobile phone to find out information about the services at that bus stop. Bus passengers could type the code of the bus stop that they want to depart from by sending a text to traveline-txt on 84268. A message would then be received which would give the details of the scheduled times for the next five buses due to leave that stop. (Replies usually took 30 seconds). There was also a phone line for enquiries, comments or problems. This operated from 7am until 9pm everyday on 0871 200 22 33.

Passenger Numbers

28. Concessionary fares have had a slight impact on passenger numbers. Three years ago the Government introduced a concessionary fares policy, which introduced a local half fare scheme, last year the policy was changed to provide free travel for older and disabled people and from April 2008, the scheme would enable users to participate in free travel across local authority boundaries after 9:30am. It should be noted that Middlesbrough has always participated in cross boundary travel without a time limit. It was noted that there hadn't been a drastic change in bus patronage but there had been an increase in the number of concessionary fares. It was anticipated that passenger numbers could rise as people took up the opportunity of free travel.
29. Prior to de-regulation Council's were in a position to be able to subsidise non-profit making routes. At the time of writing the report the Council had a small pot of funding available (£150,000) in order to be able to buy bus services. The Council contracts with the bus operator to provide a service and generally those are very early morning services in order to help people to be able to get to work and there were some weekend services, to help people get to James Cook hospital, for example.

30. The Council also received £600,000 of Government funding, to help them establish a demand-responsive service. Where people register, they are then able to ring the service and book their travel. The service runs mainly to James Cook hospital and to the employment centres of the town such as Riverside Park. The service has been running for 12 months and has 10,000 registered users. The Council will help to subsidise the Transport Service for three years in North Middlesbrough. However the panel were informed that at present the service was not yet commercially viable.

The Mayor's Views

31. The Mayor was asked to the panel to give his views on current transport issues in the town. The Mayor outlined what he regarded as the three main areas in transport that he considered were of most importance to the town. Which were
1. Park and Ride
 2. Rail Travel
 - 3 East Middlesbrough By Pass
32. He outlined that the solution to improving transport links and encouraging people to use alternative forms of transport to the car would not be down to one idea and that there would have to be a number of initiatives that would need to be implemented. He considered that there would have to be a fundamental shift in people's behaviour and attitudes towards public transport. He considered that people wore transport like they wore their clothes, in that people wanted to wear nice clothes and travel in nice clean transport, at the moment they didn't necessarily want to wear public transport. Essentially people have been used to travelling in their cars, in their own space and they would not necessarily be tempted away from their car however good the public transport link were.
33. However he considered that in recent years more and more people were being influenced by environmental concerns rather than the need to get to places quickly and that shift in people's attitudes should be harnessed. One of the ways however that could influence the public would be to ensure that special fares and extra services were being advertised. Especially the increased number of trains that were running from Marton.
34. He also outlined how there were lots of companies in Middlesbrough who employed people who had to commute from outside of Middlesbrough to their place of work. He considered that companies in Middlesbrough should make a point of employing people who lived in Middlesbrough, which would reduce the levels of commuters on the road.
35. The Mayor also highlighted the need for a feasibility study into the appropriateness of a Park and Ride scheme for the Town.

FIND OUT WHAT PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT ARE

36. The panel wanted to establish what people thought about the provision of public transport in Middlesbrough. To do this they spoke to passengers at the rail station and bus station and they sought public opinion through the Council's website.

Passengers' Views

37. The members of the panel visited Middlesbrough Railway Station on a weekday at about 5pm, when commuters were making their way home. While they were there Members had the opportunity to talk to a number of passengers who were very helpful and discussed their views with Members. It was not meant as a scientific survey but just to ask the views of the people at the station. Their views are collated below.



Rail Passengers

38. In general people were using the station and travelling by train to get to and from work. With the majority of people using it more than 3 times a week. Most people said they were using the train because it was more practical than the car and it was cheaper than driving and then parking. The majority of people who were using the service had access to alternative transport such as a car or the bus but opted to use the train. In the main people were happy with the service, but Members received a number of comments regarding the poor condition of the trains. People's suggestions for improvements to the station included

- Better heating
- Improvements to the café
- Better seating
- Make the station brighter
- Installation of a lift to access platform 2
- Interactive help points

39. The Members also asked the public about their suggestions for improvements to the service, their ideas included

- Introduction of more modern trains
- provide more carriages on trains
- Improving the passenger announcements
- Improving the timetable, more frequent trains
- Introduction of a direct train to Newcastle which operates until late



Bus Passengers

40. The panel had the opportunity to visit the town's bus station. The panel found that it was a very busy station, its opening times were from about 5am until the last bus at 12.30am. There were about 30,000 people passing through the station each day. Although that number was split between those that are travelling, those that were passing through and those that were using the shops and facilities.
41. The Councillors had a concern that at peak times there could be problems with congestion and the buses being able to access the station. The junction at Brentnall Street and the roundabout at Wilson Street being particularly problematic. The bus companies noted that they had raised their concerns with the Council and that the Council had been working with bus operators over a number of years and that they are constantly reviewing the situation.
42. Following their brief tour of the bus station a number of the panel members spoke to passengers who were waiting for their bus. Again it was not a scientific survey, but the opportunity for the panel to elicit views from the travellers.
43. Most of the passengers used buses as a form of travel on a daily and weekly basis. For a mixture of leisure and work. Some of the passengers who had access to other forms of transport chose the bus because it was more practical. In general people were happy with the services provided. Although there was a concern that there were occasions at some bus stands where people were waiting for a couple of buses that that were due and that this could cause problems.
44. The panel asked the public to write to them about their views via the Council's website. However the result was disappointing and couldn't be used to gauge public opinion across the town. However the comments that were received made reference to the poor standard of buses and trains, the cost of public transport and the lack of night time provision.

Results of the Neighbourhood Survey

45. A neighbourhood survey was conducted in October 2007 which asked residents about the extent to which their transportation needs were being met in Middlesbrough. The results of which are included within the report to give a flavour of people's views.
46. The survey found that 33% of residents do not have a car in their household. However 41% has one car, 21% have 2 cars and 4% have three or more. With the over 65s, females and the economically inactive the least likely to have access to a car in their household.

47. When asked about how people normally travelled to work, 30% went to work in a car as a single user. Two thirds (66%) of residents surveyed never use the bus within Middlesbrough, with only 2% using it every day. In order to fully understand perceptions of the bus service all residents whether they used the bus service or not were asked to comment on particular aspects of the local bus service. Satisfaction with each aspect of the bus service was consistent between 43% and 46 % on the reliability of buses, condition of shelters, ease of boarding, provision of transport information and the local bus service overall. The highest proportion of residents that were dissatisfied with the reliability of the buses was 11%. For bus users their satisfaction levels ranged from 68% to 73% on those factors.
48. All residents were asked how easy or difficult it was to access certain places from their home using their usual method of transport. The majority of residents found it fairly easy or very easy to access each place. While the proportion who described the access to local services and facilities as difficult was low it was still important to understand the accessibility issues that the minority encounter. Subsequently all those who stated that they had difficulty in accessing a local service were asked why and the availability was the main reason.

ESTABLISH WHAT PEOPLE WANT IN TERMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THEN CONSIDER IF IT CAN BE PROVIDED

49. In order to discuss rail passenger's views the panel invited the Friends of Middlesbrough Station to a panel meeting.
50. One of the main comments conveyed to the panel from all of those who attended was that the condition of the station had improved considerably in recent years. The main priority for improvement was the installation of a lift to provide disabled access to platform 2. However, at the time of writing, the lift project was ongoing, finances were in place and the scheme was awaiting permission.
51. The 'Friends' had a number of comments about the condition of the local rolling stock (the trains) that were used, in that it was old and shabby and gave the impression of a less important service. Distinction was made between the two franchises that ran train services from the station; Northern and Trans Pennine. Trans Pennine had significant funds to invest into its stations and train stock, and they had subsequently been vastly improved. Northern did not have the same level of investment, and were running trains that were 25 years old. Despite the financial restrictions Northern were very pro-active with improvements to the service and had started to put extra trains on the Nunthorpe line.
52. The panel discussed the possibilities of an integrated transport system, where for example, tickets could be bought on trains and used on connecting bus services as well. Although the panel learnt that it could be difficult to put into place in Britain due to the different layers and complexity of the different operators.
53. In general it was reported to the panel that the majority of trains ran on time and people trusted the service to get them where they need to go and on time. However occasionally when things went wrong it was noted that the operators were not very good at dealing with it.

54. It was reported that the time-controlled announcements could sometimes lead to confusion, as trains were announced that were running late. However the station was investing in new information systems.
55. In discussion the point was raised as to why there was no direct link from the Train to the Bus Station, thus aiding elderly and disabled people, and persons with heavy luggage. It was reported that the distance between the two stations was relatively short and journeys that involved a lot of luggage could be completed with the taxi service.
56. The 'friends' were all in agreement that new stations at Middlehaven, Teesside Park and James Cook Hospital would be beneficial to the town and would increase passenger numbers.

Bus Services

57. Prior to 1986 local councils were responsible for deciding bus routes and fares etc and Middlesbrough Council had its own fleet of buses. The panel heard that there was a common misconception that the provision of bus services was still a responsibility of local councils. Bus deregulation came into effect in 1986, following the 1985 Transport Act.
58. Two kinds of bus service can be provided: commercial and subsidised. Any bus operator can run whatever commercial services it wants to as long as it gives 56 days notice of either an introduction of a new service, a withdrawal of a service or timetable changes. Commercial services are those provided without any subsidy (except for the provision of concessionary fares and the mileage-based subsidy that offsets most fuel duty) and there are no restrictions on fares.
59. There is no need for an operator to cross-subsidise services under deregulation. Cross-subsidy (where the profits from better paying services are used to pay for unprofitable routes) was an essential part of the previous regulated system. Despite this, operators sometimes cross-subsidise to maintain a network at all times of the day so to keep customer loyalty or so to maintain the attractiveness of that company's travelcard (one which is only valid on that operator).
60. If there are gaps in the commercial bus network, local councils were, where funding was available, able to design bus services that bus operators can be paid to operate. These are routes that the local authority considers as socially necessary, but are not commercially viable. The local authority sets the fares, routes and times of the subsidised services.
61. However, bus companies and local councils do work closely together in partnership to improve quality and services. At one of the evidence gathering meetings Arriva North East made a commitment to the panel to look at ways of providing more night time services, especially along the route of the number 27.

Discussions with the Bus Companies

62. The panel was interested to find out from the bus companies about how they planned their routes. The panel learnt that the route patterns were not subject to much change. They were based around traditional routes serving housing estates and industrial areas. The bus operators made a comment that they would like

more consultation with local authorities to help them plan routes into new housing estates.

63. Stagecoach had undertaken a number of consultations with the public, the company have also used mystery passengers to provide feedback on services. However they did note that it often wasn't possible to consult the public about everything or to follow up on every suggestion.
64. The panel learnt that timetables were reviewed on a regular basis, however they adopted a 'if its not broke, don't fix it approach', however they did note that bus patronage could change and services are constantly reviewed to take this into account.
65. The effectiveness of 'green' bus routes was discussed. Bus companies agreed that routes could be made quicker if there were routes solely for the use of buses, if journey times were quicker this could help entice people out of their cars and on to buses. However it was noted that in order for green routes to be successful there had to be proper enforcement of the routes to ensure that only buses use them and cars don't park in them.

Dealing with Demand

66. Currently the stock of buses met the demand. Stagecoach had introduced double deck buses again in Newcastle and would like to see that happen in Middlesbrough if demand increased.
67. The panel was told that the bus companies tried to adopt a holistic approach to providing services for less busy routes. For example if the margin of profit across the day's route was profitable they will try and run an evening service on that route. Where routes operated that had smaller numbers of passengers the bus companies ran smaller buses. There were a number of issues with trying to provide services where there are fewer passenger numbers, such as driver wages and costs. The bus companies did say that they tried to explore every way of providing services that met the needs of the community.
68. The panel was interested in how bus companies worked with schools. It was noted that a company worked with MacMillan School to transport children to and from school. The panel thought that this was a good idea, because it took cars off the roads. The bus companies said that if a school approached them in order to provide home to school transport then each case would be taken on its merit.

Night Time Provision

69. The panel was interested in the bus companies' commitment to providing late night services. They said that they were not averse to providing new services, however a recent experiment by Stagecoach in Newcastle involved the provision of a number of buses that ran until 3 or 4 am in the morning, it service ran for 3 years at a massive loss. It was hard to plan routes because everyone was going in different directions so the service was not well used.
70. In their discussions with the bus operators one of the main issues that was highlighted was the need for more late night bus services. Where there were late night bus services they operated on an hourly basis providing a less flexible service.

71. In answer to this the bus companies stated that they did review the provision of services, and that passenger numbers were less on an evening and the services were provided at a level which reflected demand.
72. It presented a difficult situation because unless there was a bus for people to use then they cant, although unless numbers rose on an evening additional services would not be provided. It was hoped that if they could encourage more people to use the bus by day then this could help to support night time services.
73. The panel received an assurance from Arriva North East that they would consider the issue. They agreed to come back to the panel with the details of any improvements they could make to their services as a result and to also look at some additional evening services.

Improving the image of public transport

74. The members were interested in how the Council could help to encourage public transport use. It was noted that the main improvement, in the bus operators experience, was that improvements to journey times would increase take up.
75. The other idea that had helped increase passenger numbers was the introduction of Green Travel Plans for major employers. It was reported that sales of corporate tickets have 'gone through the roof' in Newcastle. The panel heard that the Council was in the process of employing an officer to look at this issue in Middlesbrough.

The future of bus travel

76. The bus companies agreed that there were some positive initiatives being planned as part of the bus bid. However there was a suggestion that the projects weren't brave enough. It was suggested that the main way of getting people to use buses was to increase journey times. The use of expresses buses was suggested but in order to get into the main routes quicker the bus companies would need a commitment from the Council to provide more bus lanes and ensure that they were enforced.
77. Arriva suggested that they would be keen to try new services, but they reminded members that they are a commercial venture and that they had to consider the cost implications of any new service they might want to provide.
78. The panel had concerns about how the needs of people in the Middlehaven site would be catered for as the site developed. It was in the developers' interests to work with the Council and bus operators to get public transport links in place because this will attract people to the site. Bus companies would consider running commercial services as the site develops and Arriva are working with the Council regarding a service which will cater for the new college that is being built.
79. Public transport is facing massive challenges in the coming years, levels of car ownership and congestion are increasing. All Councils will have to explore new technology, continue working in partnership with transport providers and members will need political courage to support contentious measures.

CONSIDER WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE FOR CURRENT USERS AND HOW TO ENCOURAGE NON-USERS TO SWITCH TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

80. The panel learnt that if a person opted to travel to work by public transport for 1 day per week there would be a 20% reduction in traffic on roads. To put this into context it would leave the traffic levels to those similar to the levels seen during school holidays. However people wont be persuaded to leave their cars at home if they use buses and end up sitting in the same traffic as the cars.
81. There was a common consensus that in order to get more people to use public transport then bus companies and the Council need to do more to tell people what's available.
82. The panel was also interested in public transport facilities for disabled passengers. It was confirmed that 40% of buses are designed to be able to accommodate a wheelchair. The Council was also in talks with the operators of the rail station regarding the stations provision of disabled access for platform 2.

The Future of Transport in Middlesbrough

83. The panel heard about the problems with the current public transport provision. However the panel heard about a number of large-scale initiatives that are being designed to improve public transport in the region and in Middlesbrough and provide an improved service for the future. Brief details of each of the initiatives are as follows

Tees Valley Metro

84. As part of the evidence gathering the panel wanted to consider any plans that were ongoing that may have an impact on the future of transport in the area. The panel invited Nigel Anstell, Project Director, for the Tees Valley Metro Scheme and Jonathan Spruce, Assistant Director (Strategy and Transport), Joint Strategy Unit to present information about the bid for a Tees Valley Metro Scheme. The presentation focused on the positioning of the Tees Valley Metro, within the overall public transport system, the work undertaken by Tees Valley Regeneration (TVR) and the potential benefits of the scheme for Middlesbrough.
85. The Panel learnt that there were a series of wider transport issues which had to be addressed:
- Worsening highway congestion affecting key junctions and radial corridors.
 - Capacity constraints at several key junctions on highway and rail networks.
 - Bus and rail networks that were not car-competitive.
 - Limited scope to improve the existing heavy rail service.
 - Continued decline in bus networks following lack of co-ordinated investment.
86. The Panel was advised that there were a number of proposals to address those issues and that the proposed Tees Valley Metro would play a significant role in reducing congestion. Other solutions included the Tees Valley Bus Network, A66 (T)/A19 (T)/A174 (T) Area Action Plan, Intelligent Transport Systems and Local Transport Plans.

87. In terms of the proposed Tees Valley Metro the Panel was advised that the network would initially run between Darlington and Saltburn, calling at all existing stations and five new stops, including Durham Tees Valley Airport. The new and upgraded stations would serve key employment and major regeneration sites. Routes to Hartlepool and Nunthorpe were also being examined, as part of a second phase. The Darlington to Saltburn heavy rail line would be converted for tram-train operation, with new, high quality, rolling stock, running a minimum four train per hour service. Feeder bus services and common ticketing and marketing were also included.
88. In respect of the funding arrangements the Panel was informed that the project currently fell within the 'hard to do' category. Closing the capital funding gap was critical and the gap at present was estimated to be around £45 million, out of a total cost of £140 million. Local funding contributions to the sum of £14million had 'in principle' been secured but further challenges remained. It was explained that a robust figure for avoided Network Rail renewals had been calculated at around £90 million and that this formed a significant part of the costs. In addition key stakeholder confidence in demand and revenue forecasts would need to be achieved.
89. The benefits of the Tees Valley Metro for the City Region were outlined as follows:
- Better value for money with lower long-term subsidy requirement.
 - More efficient use of current rail and bus network to better meet the travel needs over the next 20 years.
 - Enhanced capacity on the East Coast Main Line and Trans Pennine rail routes.
 - Opportunities for additional passenger and freight train services, particularly Teesport and the Northern Gateway.
 - Support to economic regeneration
90. In addition, the particular benefits of the Tees Valley Metro for Middlesbrough were discussed and outlined as follows:
- Fast and frequent connections to the East Coast Main Line at Darlington, Grand Central at Eaglescliffe and Durham Tees Valley Airport.
 - Possible new station at Teesside Park.
 - Support for the regeneration at Middlehaven and Riverside Stadium, including a possible station
 - Possible new station at James Cook University Hospital with extension to Nunthorpe.
 - Additional rail services connecting Esk Valley Line to Metro with integrated ticketing.
91. In terms of next steps Members were advised that Tees Valley Regeneration was currently working in partnership with Network Rail and that the project had entered the next stage of the GRIP (Guide to Railways Investments Projects) process. Work was ongoing to position Tees Valley Metro to be a compelling solution in Network Rail's response to the Rail White Paper, expected later this year. The Tees Valley Metro was also being positioned as a priority candidate for the RFA (Regional Funding Applications) Review in late 2007 / early 2008. The Panel was

advised that in conjunction with Network Rail and the Tees Valley Local Authorities a refined business case for the Tees Valley Metro would be prepared in early 2008.

92. The Panel was advised that if funding from Network Rail was not secured work would be undertaken to establish the reasons why. It was explained that over the next twenty years Network Rail would need to invest significantly in the railways, simply to keep services running, and that the current stock would also need to be replaced. Tees Valley Regeneration acknowledged that Network Rail might not invest the full £90million, although they were optimistic that the funding would be secured.
93. Members expressed support for the proposals and in particular for the planned new stations at Middlehaven and the Stadium. Members were interested in whether there were any proposals to extend the service to the University. The panel was also concerned about whether the scheme would become a reality.
94. It was explained that whereas previous proposals for a Tees Valley Metro had contained ambitious plans that required completely new systems, the current plans required very little build. The Panel was advised that once a train-tram system was in place, it would be easier to gain support for additional lines. In terms of timescale the Panel was informed that if the scheme were approved work would commence in 2011, with a completion date of 2013.
95. In respect of the funding arrangements the Panel was informed that the amount requested was achievable. The Panel was advised that there were a number of different funding sources, other than Network Rail, available i.e. One NorthEast, the Department for Transport, European Funding streams and Private Sector contributions. Tees Valley Regeneration was also lobbying for political support and the proposed scheme had secured the backing of local MPs.
96. Members expressed further support for the potential to develop an on-street tram system in the future, with an integrated ticket system. The Panel was advised that although on-street trams were not part of the core scheme it was far easier to include them, as part of the fabric of the town, rather than developing proposals after planned regeneration had taken place.

Sheffield's Tram System

97. The panel was interested in considering information regarding the successful tram scheme in Sheffield. Although Sheffield is a major city the panel thought that there might be some areas of good practice that could be learned from their introduction of a tram scheme. Officers from Sheffield City Council kindly provided information on the lessons they learnt and how they were encouraging people to use public transport.

How Sheffield integrated the tram system with other forms of transport

98. Park and ride schemes were established in a number of areas around the network. Further sites were added and work was underway to establish additional locations. At Meadowhall interchange, light rail, busy and heavy rail all converge to service the nearby shopping centre. The tram also served Sheffield's principal railway station that was a short walk from buses at the Sheffield Interchange.

The Supertram Network

99. It was noted that the turning point in the success of Sheffield's tram system was when conductors were introduced. The patronage of the Supertram network has continued to increase. The main lesson to be learnt was that the initial investment in good quality rolling stock had paid dividends and had allowed for growth. Three car sets in comparison with other schemes where two car tram sets had been introduced had ensured that the network had the ability to cope with increased ridership.

Different ways of encouraging people to use public transport

100. The panel was interested in finding out what methods Sheffield Council undertook to encourage people to use public transport. A range of initiatives had been introduced and included
- implementation of bus priority lanes and tram gates
 - camera enforcement of bus and tram gates at selected sites which led to improved journey time
 - Establishment of the first Statutory Quality Partnership in England. Sheffield City Council provided on street priority for public transport, South Yorkshire PTE and Sheffield City Council improved passenger waiting facilities and operators improved vehicles, staff training and refunds to passengers in the event of service cancellations.
 - Development of Park and Ride Sites
 - Introduction of real time information
 - Free city centre bus operating on a seven-minute frequency (Monday to Saturday) linking city centre destinations with bus and rail stations.
 - Discounted ticketing on bulk purchase for employers between 5% and 10% off season tickets.
 - Travel and transport roadshows alongside South Yorkshire PTE and public transport operators at major employment sites (eg Sheffield Business Park, hospitals, universities etc) That allowed employees to interact with operators and South Yorkshire PTE and resulted in refinements to public transport.

Rail Travel

101. The panel was informed that rail patronage, measured as passenger footfall at Middlesbrough Station, had increased by over 20% from 2002 to 2005 to 1,121,506. A target had been set to increase patronage by another 18% by 2010/11 against the 2004/05 baseline. It was reported that this would be achieved through the existing organic growth supported by travel awareness, travel information, travel planning and marketing activities.
102. Northern operated services between Saltburn and Darlington on a ½ hourly basis and hourly services to Newcastle. Additional rail services to Nunthorpe had been introduced and further investigation was to take place on the development of a rail halt at James Cook University Hospital.

Results of the Nunthorpe Travel Survey

103. The council commissioned a company to undertake an independent survey of the travel patterns of residents who lived in the Nunthorpe area with the purpose of determining how respondents travel and to encourage them to use alternative methods of transport by helping them with a personalised travel plan.

104. The survey asked residents about the transport that was currently available to them and how they travelled to work. Residents stated the reasons why they used the car for commuting and whether there were any alternative modes of transport available to them.
105. The results found that over 50% of the residents in Nunthorpe had two cars or more. Travel was not seen as a barrier to employment and most of the workers were employed in jobs within 5 miles of Middlesbrough. Just over half the respondents said that there wasn't anything that would make them switch to an alternative method of transport. Although 32% said they would switch if improvements were made to the alternative methods.
106. As the Mayor stated previously getting people to change their travelling habits and use alternative methods of transport to the car was very difficult. The survey highlighted that 81% of people travelled to work by car as a single user. The respondents in the survey suggested that 78% said that they would not be interested in car sharing whether it be to save money on parking or petrol costs. Over two thirds of the respondents did not want to receive any information on the alternative methods of transport because they had access to the information already and preferred not to be contacted by the Council.
107. Where people did want information about alternative methods of transport they were offered a personalised travel plan and were asked to specify which mode of transport they were interested in receiving information about. Plans were then drawn up and returned to the resident to assist them with their travel plans.
108. In addition to the travel survey a survey of Nunthorpe Bus Stops was also commissioned. As part of the Council's strategy to encourage the use of public transport, car sharing and alternative means of travel the residents of Nunthorpe were sent an information leaflet entitled 'the bus planner'. The leaflet provided an updated bus route map of the routes from Nunthorpe into central Middlesbrough along with the news of the 'bus shelter make-overs' that had been carried out in the Nunthorpe area along with other helpful information.
109. As a follow up to the campaign the survey was carried out to ask people if they thought the information had been useful and to understand the profile of people using the bus stops. The results also found that people thought that the route maps were useful

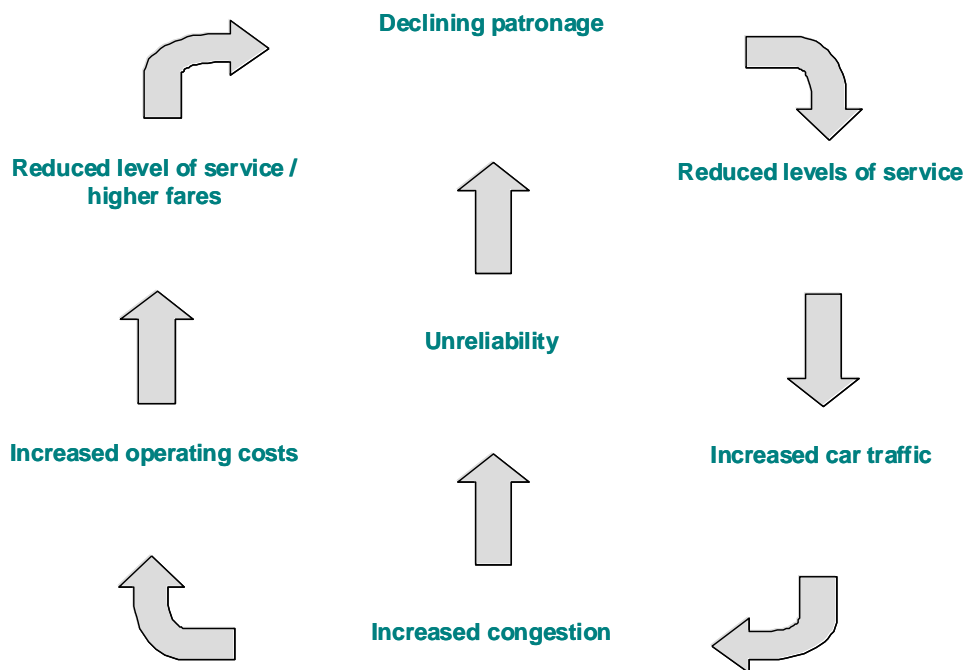
Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements

110. The Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) presented the panel with the details of how improvements would be made to bus services in the Tees Valley through the Bus Network Improvements major scheme.
111. In 2004 the JSU managed the Tees Valley Bus Network Review. The review concluded with a series of improvements to deliver and these included
 - a simple hierarchical, integrated network offering a high frequency, competitive, quality alternative to the car
 - a focus on the whole journey concept with infrastructure investment
 - improved accessibility and competitiveness
 - a stable sustainable commercial network supporting and generation patronage increases and investment in all routes.

112. The above improvements are the subject of the major local transport scheme bid. If the bid was to be successful it would provide a significant improvement in the bus services and bring together partners to secure quality services over a defined period of time. The total costs of the improvements would be over £40 million and work was due to start in Summer 2008.
113. The bid has been in development for 2-3 years and the Council has been in discussions with the bus operators. In order for the bid to be successful then the projects that were put forward in the bid had to be ones that captured the public's imagination. The public were consulted and asked about the barriers they had to using public transport and their areas of concern. Following the consultation the Councils across the Tees Valley had a number of schemes which would be developed.
114. The panel were shown the 'Circle of Decline'



'Circle of Decline'



Tees Valley Bus Network Improvements

115. The panel were told about the planned quality services and corridors in Middlesbrough and included a number express services and services from Middlesbrough to James Cook Hospital, Marton, Stockton and Eston. There were also a number of core corridor improvements which included the following
- at least 6 buses per hour Monday to Saturday day time

- at least 2 buses per hour on an evening and Sunday
- bus priority at key locations
- vehicle detection at traffic signals
- review of loading/waiting restrictions
- comprehensive enforcement
- raised kerbs at all stops
- new/enhanced waiting facilities
- some real time information
- CCTV on buses and at some stops
- 95% punctuality and 99% reliability targets

116. Other components of the scheme included quality buses, better information, revised ticketing and integration with the rail network. There will be a formal binding legal partnership between the Council, the JSU and the bus operators that can't be signed off until the infrastructure is complete. The Council has to ensure that bus priority measures are introduced on the quality corridors, that they are enforced, that bus stop and station facilities are upgraded and that they facilitate reduced bus journey times. The JSU will co-ordinate the partnership and draw in funding. They would lead on the development of complimentary measures such as marketing and branding. The bus operators commitments included providing a minimum service frequency, with no subsidy after 18 months, reduced journey times, better quality buses, more demanding punctuality and reliability targets and work with the local authorities in an innovative way to ensure that the whole network was sustainable in the long term.

The Major Bus Bid

117. After being presented with the theory behind the bid the panel received information on the practical measures that were going to be implemented if the bid was successful.
118. Members were shown detailed plans for the improvements to bus routes in the Marton Road and Newport Road areas. The improvements had been designed to speed up bus journeys. The works along Newport Road were also being designed to take into account the developments that were taking place in Cannon Park.
119. The Council had worked with the bus companies in order to discuss routes and where the delays were along those routes in order to agree useful solutions.
120. Panel members were keen to ensure that any of the improvements that were being made as part of the bus bid would be communicated to Councillors at an early stage so that they would be aware of any potential disruption while the work was being undertaken. Panel members received an assurance that Members would be informed.

CONCLUSION

121. Based on evidence given throughout the investigation the Panel concluded:

- a) That the issue of public transport is a wide and far-reaching topic. Where there is no one particular solution that can be implemented to solve the problems. What the panel did agree was that long term plans must be implemented in order to address increasing car use and declining public transport patronage.

- b) The panel was therefore supportive of the Major Bus Bid and the elements for improvement that were contained within it. They were especially supportive of the improvements to Newport Road and the plans for an improved gateway to the town centre.
- c) The panel was also supportive of the Tees Valley Metro Scheme and especially the possibility of planned new stations at Middlehaven and James Cook University Hospital.
- d) Following the visit to the station the panel agreed that they were pleased to see the work that had taken place to improve the fabric and the facilities at the station. The panel saw the installation of a lift as being important to the development of the station's facilities for disabled people and they were pleased that work was in progress. Members wanted the lift project to be completed as soon as possible.
- e) The panel were supportive of the introduction of the real time bus information initiative, however they wanted to see the scheme rolled out across the town as soon as possible.
- f) The panel was very grateful to the bus companies for their participation in the review. The panel had the opportunity to discuss the issue of night time transport provision and were pleased that their comments had been noted. The panel was encouraged that the bus companies had listened to their suggestions and that they would be willing to report on any improvements to the services that they made as a result of the discussions with the panel.
- g) The panel found that the bus companies had a number of special fares and daily and weekly tickets that Members thought were not publicised widely enough.
- h) The panel thought that incentives should be targeted at commuters to try and reduce the dependence on the car. They were supportive of the development of green travel plans for major employers.
- i) The panel were in agreement with the Mayor that an investigation into the potential of a park and ride scheme would be useful and timely

RECOMMENDATIONS

122. That the Economic Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive:

- a) As part of their work programme the panel had agreed to undertake an investigation into the potential for a Park and Ride Scheme for Middlesbrough. The panel would also like to see a council investigation into this issue for which the results of the scrutiny investigation could be submitted.
- b) That the Council continues to pursue the option of an East Middlesbrough by-pass with Redcar and Cleveland Council.
- c) That the Council write to the appropriate rail authorities and ask them to comment on how they will improve the issues that arose from the panel's discussions with

- passengers regarding the following
 - Improving the standard of trains
 - Providing better passenger announcements
 - making the station brighter, improving lighting and heating
 - confirmation of the timescales for the installation of the lift
- d) That in their dealings with the bus companies the Council pursue the following
 - That they continue to use mystery shoppers on buses
 - That there is an introduction of double deckers as a pilot scheme where demand warrants it on certain routes
 - That bus companies consider providing more late night services by the end of the year and work with the Council on providing transport in Middlesbrough to coincide with the Alive After 5 initiative
 - To ensure that bus routes are planned into the Middlehaven Site.
 - Increase the percentage of disabled access busses
- e) In any new school or college development that the Council starts communication with schools at an early stage to ensure that there are bus stops/waiting areas which can cope with the demand
- f) The panel would like to see the implementation of real time bus information across the town as soon as possible
- g) That a marketing campaign by the bus operators should be established to publicise the special offers, including more details of weekly tickets and cheaper tickets with the aim of encouraging more bus patronage. Which could include
 - the consideration of widening the Nunthorpe pilot scheme to the whole of Middlesbrough
 - the appropriate distribution of bus timetables, with the consideration that they should be issued to community centres and libraries as ways of publicising services
- h) The panel would like to invite the bus operators back to the panel in a year's time to discuss any areas of improvement made as a result of the discussions with the panel and in particular the provision of night time bus services.
- i) That the panel endorses the Major Bus Bid and the Tees Valley Metro bid and if it were successful the panel would like to see the officers involved undertake a benchmarking exercise with similar projects to seek out best practice.
- j) That the council develops an incentive scheme for their staff to encourage them to use public transport and that the Council works with other major employers in the town to help them implement such a scheme.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

123. The Panel was grateful to all those who presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

- Ray Mallon, Mayor of Middlesbrough

- Ron Lowes, Executive Member for Transport
- Brian Glover, Head of Transport and Design Services
- Lesley Jackson, Local Transport Plan Co-ordinator
- Alistair Bolton, Group Engineer, Transport and Design Services
- The Friends of Middlesbrough Station
- Doug Elphee, Commercial Manager, Stagecoach North East
- Robin Knight, Commercial Director, Stagecoach North East
- Martin Shier, Area Manager South, Arriva North East
- Mark Ellis, Commercial Manager, Arriva North East
- Nigel Anstell, Project Director, for the Tees Valley Metro Scheme
- Jonathan Spruce, Assistant Director (Strategy and Transport), Joint Strategy Unit
- Steve Payne, Transport Strategy Team, Joint Strategy Unit
- Tony Dos Santos, Middlesbrough Bus Station
- Ian MacGregor, Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit

COUNCILLOR JAVED ISMAIL

CHAIR OF THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT SCRUTINY PANEL

February 2008

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:

- (a) Tees Valley Bus Network Review, Executive Report 26 September 2006