

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**SAFER, GREENER AND CLEANER PLACES
CABINET MEMBER**

**TRANSFORMING TRANSPORT –
CALLCONNECT AND SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICES**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To recommend improvements to local public transport services for the benefit of customers.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The council is statutorily required to review the level of need for public transport across North Lincolnshire. The aim is to ensure that services are designed to best meet the reasonable needs of customers and that they remain affordable by seeking to develop and promote services so that they can run commercially and without the need for public subsidy.
- 2.2 The CallConnect service was introduced in 2016 and initially funded as a pilot via the Government's continued investment. CallConnect is a flexible bus service and operates in the rural areas of North Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 CallConnect complements local scheduled bus services in a way that best provides local residents with access to a comprehensive public transport service. In addition, with good connections to other frequent services, CallConnect helps towards achieving an integrated public transport network across North Lincolnshire that best meets the reasonable needs of local residents.
- 2.4 In October 2017, the CallConnect service had 3,091 registered users. There were 2,510 journeys recorded in that month and usage continues to grow. In particular, usage is increasing month on month in the Brigg, Caistor and Ridge and the Barton and Ferry CallConnect areas.
- 2.5 Due to the success of the CallConnect service, the council prioritised investment to ensure that the service continues to be a major part of our transport network and is in operation for the longer term. An independent review concluded that it is appropriate in this area but has also suggested ways to improve the current service. In order to continue providing tax payers' value for money, we now need to integrate all aspects of our

existing subsidised public bus services to ensure that public transport services provide an effective offer for customers.

2.6 The aim is to achieve an integrated and sustainable public transport system which best serves local people at an affordable cost. To these ends, we have established that CallConnect provides a more flexible service for residents in areas that are currently poorly served by traditional bus services. As such, CallConnect is a key element towards transforming transport in the area, ensuring that the service offered is the most effective and efficient in meeting the needs of customers.

2.7 To further transform local transport provision, we propose the following:

- Utilise CallConnect where passenger numbers are currently low and the current service is infrequent;
- Introduce fixed routes with CallConnect where there is sufficient demand;
- Work to Total Transport principles of integration with school and college transport where possible;
- Invest in concessionary fares at an annual cost of circa £1.8m;
- Review existing networks to encourage strategic direct routes supported by CallConnect; and
- Aim to increase the number of commercial routes operating across North Lincolnshire.

2.8 The recommendations detailed within this report take into account the following considerations:

- The level of passenger demand at different times and on different days and how best this can be met via a combination of scheduled bus services and CallConnect
- Passenger demand to take full advantage of a flexible bus service.
- Increasing the use of fixed and regular journeys already undertaken by CallConnect to achieve greater service sustainability.
- Ensuring that services continue to operate within value for money benchmarks.
- Achieving a sustainable public transport offer that best serves the reasonable needs of local residents but that continues to provide value for tax payers' money.

2.9 As a result of the above issues, some changes to current services are suggested to improve the offer for customers and improve strategic connectivity. These are summarised below.

2.9.1 Officers have explored the possibility of securing an improved continuous bus corridor between Kirmington and Scunthorpe. This means that in addition to a current service 4 between Brigg and Scunthorpe, there will be an additional express 4 (X4) every two hours between Kirmington/Humberside airport and Scunthorpe. The X4 will have a quicker and more direct route to

Scunthorpe bus station than the current service 4. A key aim is to make the service more attractive for young people, thereby encouraging them to make greater use of the service and improving their opportunity to be both economically and socially active. The X4 service will run on a Saturday replacing the need to operate the service 366 (Goxhill to Scunthorpe via Brigg) that currently runs on a Saturday.

- 2.9.2 An initial subsidy to the operator will be available to encourage new passengers and thereby enable this service to fully operate commercially in the future. These changes also enable a reconfiguration of the Brigg town services.
- 2.9.3 It is proposed to review the route of the Humber Flyer (Grimsby to Hull) so that it includes the airport and villages along the A1077. This would provide an improved service for residents of Ulceby, Wootton, Thornton Curtis and Barrow to Barton, Hull or Grimsby. The Humber Flyer also runs into the early evening compared to the current service 450 that stops mid-afternoon, thereby extending the access to public transport for local residents. Discussions with the operator of this service are ongoing and the outcome will be reported to the Cabinet Member upon their conclusion.
- 2.9.4 The intention, subject to the above is to then enhance Service 450 in its current form with an improved service running between Barton and Brigg. Service 5 will continue, thereby ensuring that South Killingholme residents can access this route between Immingham and Grimsby.
- 2.9.5 CallConnect continues to provide a supplementary service and usage continues to increase in both the Brigg and Ferry ward areas. The service operates between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday and between 8am and 6pm on Saturday.
- 2.9.6 We have worked with the current operator of service 94 (Kirton in Lindsey to Brigg), to include an additional loop of Kirton in Lindsey (Kirton) instead of travelling through Gainsthorpe, that seldom has any passengers. This will replace the Kirton Klipper, offering an improved service for passengers that achieves the following benefits:
- a Kirton town service running five days per week instead of the current three days per week;
 - direct access to Brigg from more stops in Kirton;
 - a two hourly service in both peak and off peak times to allow greater flexibility.
- 2.9.7 Kirton in Lindsey Town Council has considered and supports the proposal.

- 2.9.8 Residents from Scawby travelling to Scunthorpe will catch service 94 to Brigg and then onto Scunthorpe. As such, they will no longer have the inconvenience of having to change buses in Brigg.
- 2.9.9 The off peak service 55 between Appleby and Scunthorpe has few passengers. Existing passengers can use service 60 as an alternative or are able to access a flexible CallConnect. A fixed CallConnect will be introduced on Fridays from Appleby to Scunthorpe and will include Dragonby. The overall service offer to most customers will be improved with a Friday service from Appleby.
- 2.9.10 CallConnect will provide a service for the passengers who currently use the Isle Shopper to travel into Epworth and back, introduced with an additional fixed route that will run on a Friday. A fixed route CallConnect service between Wroot and Blaxton operates five days per week and has proven extremely popular.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The recommendation is to agree the proposed changes to services as set out in this paper.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The statutory obligation for local transport authorities is to determine the level of need in an area. Once the need is established we then determine what we will do to meet the need. Reviewing services allows us to determine whether the current network best meets changing demands for services. It also allows for the transformation of transport by providing a more strategic scheduled bus network supplemented by CallConnect in the rural areas for the benefit of customers.
- 4.2 The changes proposed have been carefully considered. The ultimate aim is to provide improved overall connectivity for residents by making the best use of the various services available while at the same time providing value for taxpayers' money.
- 4.3 The proposals provide a longer term sustainable core of bus routes serving interurban settlements across North Lincolnshire. CallConnect provides a service that is available Mondays to Saturdays (please insert times). As customer demand for public transport changes we need to reflect this in the subsidised network. Doing nothing doesn't help to achieve our vision of a strategic transport network or improving customer responsiveness.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Adopting the proposals set out in this report will help towards ensuring value for money is achieved, while at the same time ensuring good connectivity for customers.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The proposals in this report take account of feedback on local bus service provision from a range of stakeholders that include bus service operators, local residents and elected members. The aim is to ensure that residents continue to receive an effective public transport service. As such, a core principle of the review is to ensure continuing access to public transport services.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the proposals for delivering improved local transport services as set out in this report to come into effect at the earliest practicable opportunity.

DIRECTOR: OPERATIONS

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: - None