

Committee:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	21 October 2021
Title of Report:	Response of the Executive Director - Cabinet Working Group: Transport in Cumbria
Report by:	Angela Jones, Executive Director, Economy & Infrastructure
Cabinet Member:	Keith Little, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Cllr Stewart Young, Leader

What is the Report About? (Executive Summary)

1. This report provides a response to the report of the Cabinet Working Group for Transport in Cumbria.

Recommendation of the Executive Director

2. Cabinet considers the report and options presented by the Working Group.

Background to the Proposals

3. On 18th March 2021 Cabinet approved the establishment of a cross party Member working group and agreed the Terms of Reference for the group. The Working Group was established to examine and review current passenger transport services in Cumbria, identifying any gaps in meeting the needs of local communities and to identify opportunities to enhance local sustainable transport provision.
4. The Cabinet Working Group have produced a report setting out options to enhance local sustainable transport provision for consideration by Cabinet, based on the evidence obtained and evaluated by the Working Group.
5. The options recommended by the Cabinet Working Group are set out in paragraphs 9.1.1 to 9.1.5 in the Full Report and are included below:

Option 1: *Consider the usefulness of and develop a County-wide Transport Strategy that includes and addresses the following areas identified through options 2 – 5.*

Option 2: *Use the opportunities presented through national strategies and policy direction to consider and develop proposals for the integration of transport modes, to enable a network across the county that ensures public transport is a viable option for journeys. Encompassing multi modal ticketing, timetable alignment community provision, commercial providers, and demand responsive transport.*

Taking in to account the reality of a rural context meaning the first and last mile is often much more than one mile.

Taking into consideration the inclusive transport agenda and the drive for active travel to take a key role in the future of transport.

Use the opportunities presented through national strategies and policy direction to drive the integration of modes of transport through multi-modal, multi-journey and area ticketing covering all operators. Better alignment of timetables to enable easy interchange between public transport services of all modes will also be essential.

Option 3: *Consider the key role physical infrastructure can have in increasing the accessibility of public transport and develop proposals that enable integration of modes of transport for example:*

- *Station improvements enabling other services to be provided and integrated with rail e.g., buses, car hire and cycling and to ensure stations are inclusive*
- *Park and ride schemes for residents and for tourism purposes*
- *Bus Station improvements*
- *Where issues are identified by local communities, consider making improvements to bus stop access routes. Measures could include improving surfaces on access routes, improved maintenance of vegetation, improved lighting, CCTV and regular cleaning and maintenance of bus shelters. On busy roads, ensure safe pedestrian crossing facilities are available in the vicinity of bus stops.*
- *Consider providing more bus priority measures where buses are regularly delayed or journey times increased by other road traffic.*

Option 4: *Explore and analyse the appropriateness of road charging as an approach for Cumbria and monitor the impact of national road pricing strategies and how both could contribute to the sustainability of transport provision in Cumbria. It is proposed that this be undertaken through a working group being established to analyse the approach.*

Option 5: *Re-consider the decision that Cumbria County Council will provide scheduled transport solutions due to the negative impact on local providers who provide private hire seven days a week.*

Response to the Cabinet Working Group Report

6. The Cabinet Working Group interviewed local providers, commercial transport providers, officers from Cumbria County Council and those representing the community to enable an evidence base on which to provide considered options for inclusion in this report to ensure the future of transport is sustainable, fit for purpose and accessible. The report and findings have been welcomed and will help inform any future decisions relating to Transport Policy and Plans.
7. The Options presented are timely as Government has recently published Bus Back Better, the long-term national bus strategy for England outside London. The Strategy requires that Local Transport Authorities work with their local bus operators to produce and publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 31 October

2021. The draft Bus Service Improvement Plan will be considered by Cabinet on 21st October 2021.

8. The Council has recognised the importance that physical infrastructure can have in increasing the accessibility of public transport and transport integration. The Council has sought to be proactive in securing investment for the development and delivery of transport integration in road, rail, cycling and walking and public transport; with work progressing on a new rural mobility bus pilot centred on Egremont, Penrith, Ulverston and Wigton. We have also sought to ensure transport is central in the planning and regeneration of our places and communities, developing effective synergies with initiatives like the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals and Local Plans.
9. Acknowledging the importance of inclusive transport and active travel, we have been progressing the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan (CTIP) This seeks to present an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure priorities shaped by three broad objectives:
 - Clean and Healthy Cumbria - Promoting the role of active travel and digital infrastructure as enablers of inclusive economic growth and supporting the health and well-being of our communities and the decarbonisation of transport networks.
 - Connected Cumbria - Promoting improved transport networks across and into Cumbria to connect our places and support economic growth and opportunities for businesses and communities.
 - Community Cumbria - Promoting integrated approaches to transport, supporting opportunity and renewal within towns and communities across Cumbria with better transport used to improve social inclusion.
10. The Plan is now subject to a public consultation closing on 25th October 2021. The views of the public and wider stakeholders will support the finalising of the plan.
11. Supporting the Council's agreed priorities and outcomes we continue to work closely with Transport for the North, in the development of their plans to integrate transport modes and their draft decarbonisation strategy, together with National Highways, Network Rail, Train Operating Companies and bus operators as they plan their priorities and services.
12. The work of the Council is set in a context of evolving national transport priorities, including the clear drive towards inclusive growth and the decarbonisation of transport networks, but also more structural changes like the establishment of Great British Railways. This process of change requires the council to remain agile and responsive in the development and delivery of its transport strategy, and to position ourselves to respond to competitive funding streams from Government.

Other Considerations

13. The report contains a number of options which Members will be asked to note and consider. The information below provides some further information in response to the options presented.

Road Pricing

14. No substantive proposals have been produced by the Government for National Road Pricing. We will continue to monitor for any legislative or policy changes.

Scheduled Transport Solutions

15. The Council's inhouse transport service was established to provide schedule services where there has been market failure, where commercial services are deemed to be unviable. We will continue to review the need for these services, and where there is a commercial alternative we will not compete with other operators.

Future Policy and Plans – Local Government Reform (LGR)

16. Cumbria is in the early stages of Local Government Reform (LGR) which is due to be fully implemented on 1st April 2023. In July 2021 the government announced that it intended to proceed with a two-unitary 'east/west' model. The future of public transport under Local Government Reform is still to be determined. The Working Group report will help inform the discussions on future policy and service delivery for transport within the context of LGR.

Options Considered and Risks Identified

Option (a)

17.
 - Cabinet considers the report and options presented by the Working Group.

Option (b)

18.
 - Cabinet may choose not to consider the report and options. However, this would undermine the opportunity to engage constructively with Members on key issues for Transport.

19. **Risks** – There are no risks associated with considering the findings in this report. Any further actions or decisions will be made in accordance with the Constitution and Schemes of Delegation, having regard to any consultation where appropriate.

Reasons for the recommendation/key benefits

20. The options put forward by the Cabinet Working Group reflect the knowledge, views and experience from a range of interested parties, experts and

stakeholders. The report will provide a strong evidence base to consider the future of transport in Cumbria.

Financial – What Resources will be needed and how will it be Funded?

21. There are no direct financial implications of the recommendation contained within this report.

Legal Aspects – What needs to be considered?

22. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report. Any further actions or decisions which are made following this report should be made in accordance with the Constitution and Schemes of Delegation, having regard to any consultation where appropriate.

Health and Safety Aspects – What needs to be considered?

23. The County Council has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated legislation and regulations to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, adequate health and safety management arrangements are in place to protect employees, members, customers, and visitors to County Council related services including transport where provision falls within County Council governance arrangements.
24. The provision of transport across the County has health and safety risks and therefore any future activity from the report recommendations should consider health and safety implications in accordance with the commitments outlined in the County Council Annual Health and Safety Policy Statement last agreed by Cabinet in July 2021.

Council Plan Priority – How do the Proposals Contribute to the Delivery of the Council's Stated Outcomes? (Outcomes – People in Cumbria are Health Safe, Places in Cumbria are well connected and thriving, the Economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone)

25. The Transport Working Group report and its findings contribute in particular to the delivery of two of the Council's stated outcomes. These are: 1) Places in Cumbria are well connected and thriving, and 2) the Economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone.

What is the impact of the Decision on Health Inequalities and Equality and Diversity issues?

26. The decision does not have any direct impact on equality and diversity matters. Any further decisions would be subject to Equality Impact Assessments and consultation, where appropriate.

Appendices

None.

Key Facts

Electoral Division(s): All

Executive Decision	Key Decision Included in Forward Plan	Exempt from call-in	Exemption agreed by scrutiny chair	Considered by scrutiny, if so detail below	Environmental or sustainability assessment undertaken?	Equality impact assessment undertaken?
Yes	No	N/A	N/A	No	No	No

Approved by the relevant Cabinet Member/s on 29 September 2021

Background Papers

Cabinet Report – Cabinet Working Group Transport – 18th March 2021

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