

SERVICE 541 MEETING

MONDAY 21ST JANUARY

ROOM 23, COUNTY OFFICES, KENDAL

Present

Beryl Mansbridge (BM), Helsington Parish Council; Robert Judson (RJ), Windermere Town Council; David Hardy (DH), Underbarrow & Bradleyfield Parish Council; Richard Metcalfe (RM), Crook Parish Council; Jim Bland (JB), County Councillor for the Lyth Valley; Cheryl Cowperthwaite (CC), Locality Transport Team Leader (CCC); Kelly Alty (KA), Area Engagement Officer (CCC)

Apologies

John Holmes – District Councillor Lyth Valley; Mary Harkness, Crosthwaite & Lyth PC

Feedback from Previous Meeting

Several points and queries have been made regarding the Community Wheels proposal and predicted costs. Detailed below is a summary of responses;

Community Wheels Costings

Alongside previous costings distributed, an indicative figure of £3 per passenger has been calculated to cover the cost of the service should this operate at full capacity.

Volunteer drivers are paid 45p per mile, overall costs incurred with drivers vary dependent upon where they travel to and from.

MiDAS tests and CRB checks will be provided by CCC via current systems. 1st year – CCC will support the difference (should this arise) between the cost and income generated. Calculation of the exact cost of the service is estimated as certain costs are fixed whereas Income is not.

SMART CARD Systems & Pre-booking

Smart Cards are already issued via CCC and a pre-booking system could be waived for this service. Passengers are not legally able to use their concessionary bus passes and pay to travel on scheduled services.

Vehicle Usage

Buses will be additionally used by CCC for services currently contracted out which the County has to provide whilst also available to the community for wider usage.

Further Discussions

RJ disputed the community wheels costings and that the recruitment of a driver would occur. A suggested alternative option was to tweak the service to encourage greater usage or explore options through local stores i.e. ASDA. Concerns were expressed that the current service is a Kendal service for parishes within the Lyth Valley and that changes to the service may dilute usage. CCC already has a register of volunteer drivers who may be willing to support this service. The current level of funding for

the service is not sustainable; funds are available until approximately June but no further funding is forthcoming. Last Year Cumbria received a grant from the Department for Transport, but the Government is clear that the grant cannot be used to support scheduled bus services and must be used for community-based alternative schemes such as Community Wheels.

RM had to leave the meeting but offered his full support to trialling a Community Wheels scheme. JB highlighted that a recent survey undertaken highlighted that 9/10 passengers would be willing to pay a fee to travel. DH concluded that he would offer his support to trial the Community Wheels option. It was agreed that the new service needs to roll seamlessly into the old and an exact date must be agreed.

Post November Meeting Queries

RJ raised a number of queries regarding the proposed service and requested that it was noted that he was "Offended by the response to his queries as it was felt that the original information circulated was insulting". In response it was highlighted that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss concerns and provide further feedback. Queries were also raised regarding the decision CCC made to discontinue the service in 2011, further information can be found within the paper submitted to South Lakeland Local Committee entitled 'Review of County Council Supported Bus Services' - <http://councilportal.cumbria.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=128&MId=4955&Ver=4>.

All other points were raised were discussed within the meeting.

Next Steps

- Next step is to liaise with the community and recruit volunteer drivers for the service.
- Develop a steering group of people to oversee and promote the service, long-term approach may be to analyse and develop the routes.
- Date to be confirmed and set with regards to changing the service.
- Information / Article to be prepared to promote recruitment of drivers.
- Identify current volunteer drivers registered with the County operating within the area who may be interested.
- Work with service users regarding proposed changes.