

**Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – Planning, Transport & Environment**  
**13<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**Public Transport – Update**

This note provides a brief update on some issues raised at the Panel's last meeting.

**1) CCTV at railway stations**

We obtained Section 106 funding from developments at Somerdale and Bath Western Riverside to provide funding for CCTV installations at Keynsham and Oldfield Park stations respectively. The team managing the Council's Communications Hub has expressed interest in carrying out the monitoring at stations as part of their wider CCTV work but this and any maintenance would need funding. They have now established costings so that we can determine if a source of funding (such as LSTF) can be utilised and this will be progressed by the relevant Officers.

Notes

There is a small shortfall in the level of Section 106 contribution from Somerdale (which was based on a fairly basic, cheap installation) but we are seeking to establish whether this can be addressed by using part of the Section 106 from K2 site.

There are cameras at Bath Spa station on the First Great Western Network, with feeds in to a PC on the station and into their HQ at Swindon. These cameras are not actively monitored but in essence meet the basic requirements for the Company. The assets are actually owned by Network Rail.

Network Rail (who is the railway landowner) would not generally fund CCTV unless there were local problems like vandals interfering with railway equipment, especially signal cabling. First Great Western (FGW) does not see CCTV as its responsibility either, unless there are specific local problems or where they are obliged to install it as part of their franchise obligations.

In the authority's response to the DfT consultation in June 2014 on the proposed Direct Award of the franchise to FGW, we expressed the view that they should be required to have CCTV at all stations. We will have to wait and see what is agreed between DfT and FGW.

If the Council are to undertake monitoring of the cameras they may need to be replaced and upgraded and costs for this have been considered as part of the proposal.

**2) Supported Buses – access requirements**

Bus operators have a legal duty to comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (as amended). These are intended to ensure that disabled people can get on and off vehicles that are used to provide bus services in safety and without unreasonable difficulty and, in the case of wheelchair users, can do so whilst remaining in their wheelchairs. The Regulations lay down dates by which different types of bus must comply. Single-deck buses weighing 7.5 tonnes or less must do so by 1 January 2015. Accessibility for wheelchairs is most commonly achieved through operation of low floor vehicles but wheelchair lift access to a step-entrance vehicle is allowed under the Regulations.

All our local bus service contracts specify that fully-accessible vehicles must be operated, regardless of the current legal requirements. We were made aware that one of our contractors was not complying with the contractual requirements in respect of one timetabled journey on one rural bus service. The vehicle operated was a step-entrance vehicle fitted with a lift but there was inadequate space within the vehicle to accommodate a wheelchair. We advised the contractor of the breach of contract requirements and gave formal notice to rectify it within the time period laid down in the contract. We reserved the right to terminate the contract in the event of failure to rectify the matter within that time period.

The Transport & Parking Service now employs a Compliance Officer, who monitors operators and vehicles running home-to-school transport and local bus service contracts. He carried out an unannounced check on this contractor to ascertain whether our notice had been complied with. He confirmed that:

- (i) the wheelchair lift is operational,
- (ii) the driver has been trained to use it
- (iii) there is space within the vehicle to accommodate a wheelchair
- (iv) the vehicle has the necessary equipment to carry a wheelchair safely.

We will carry out further occasional checks in the future.

We have no powers to take action against bus operators who operate non-accessible vehicles on commercial bus services or contracts for other authorities. If we become aware of any breaches of the PSVAR, however, we will notify the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency.

### **3) Bus Quality Improvements**

We have a good track record in bidding successfully for government funding including for the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund, Green Bus Fund, LSTF, Better Bus Area.

A pot of Central Government money is available for new community transport vehicles for rural areas and we have made our schemes aware of the opportunity. Bids need to be submitted by 15th January 2015. Unfortunately it's likely that MSN and Keynsham Dial-A-Ride services will not meet the criteria because they will fall foul of the State

Aid threshold. DfT are very sensitive to this at present because some bus operators in the East Midlands complained to the European Commission about support for CT groups in 2012.

A team of officers has been formed to lead on submitting bids to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to support improvements to buses and taxis. Workshops on how to submit bids are being held in January and further work to ensure our bids are successful will follow on from this.

#### **4) Responsibility for the Bath Bus Station**

The responsibility for the provision and cleanliness of the toilets for disabled users and for the café concession within the bus station falls to First Bus.

Andrew Cooper from Bath BID has approached First about the issues raised. As a consequence the BID is now cleaning the station on a regular basis as well as looking at the frequency of cleans outside the station area. They are also having discussions regarding the rental of the vacant unit. This will now be added to the list of areas discussed between the Council and BID at monthly meetings to ensure the cleanliness of the area through a partnership approach.