

HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY PANEL Item 21

DRAFT Action notes and panel recommendations from the HTST Member Policy Panel 21 July 2020

Present:

Members: Cllrs Clare, Wares, O'Quinn, Mears, Hills, Grimshaw.


Officers: Georgina Clarke-Green, Jo Lyons, Regan Delf, Carolyn Bristow, Alice Rowland, Giles Rossington, Chris Pugh.

Guests:

Fiona England from PaCC
Rachel Burstow from HillPark
Bob Wall from Central Hub Brighton

Operators:

Radio Cabs
Streamline
Southern
Ace Travel
Community Transport
Brighton Taxi 4U

Item	Discussion and agreed actions
Welcome and introductions	<p>Cllr Clare opened the meeting and welcomed the panel and the guests who had joined.</p> <p>She has asked why the agenda was released late and will share an update on that with the panel when she has a response.</p> <p>It was hoped the meeting today would include a report commissioned by the chief executive on some of the issue that arose last summer, however that is not yet finalised so will come to the next meeting.</p>
Procedural business	None.
Action points from the last meeting	<p>Action: Carolyn to update minutes of the June meeting with some clarifications from the panel – done</p> <p>Action: Cllr Clare agreed to review and collate outstanding actions from previous minutes. Answers provided and were read out. Provided here below.</p> <div data-bbox="523 1704 576 1765" style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Summary of outstanding questic</p> <p>Action: Regan to discuss with the special school headteachers the potential for schools to align to transport groupings. – done.</p>

	<p>Action: Regan to look to put interim customer satisfaction level back in to the plan. – done.</p> <p>Action: Cllr Clare asked for an officer report to come to following meeting on potential new procurement arrangement. This will be done once the CE report is in. Action: ensure this is logged as a future item.</p> <p>Agreed: Regan to share children’s feedback with the panel. Regan explained that more work on this was being done and then to be shared with the panel.</p> <p>Action: Diana to take a suggestion back to PaCC about doing a survey that explicitly tries to split the historical views to what the service delivery is like now.</p> <p>Fiona expressed concern about going back to parents/carers/children and asking them again about their experiences of last September. Cllr Wares agreed that wasn’t necessary, the LGA review covered that. He suggested that November might be a good time to collect some further feedback, to help the panel create their final recommendations for CYPs.</p> <p>Action: Clarity of administration’s position to be sought – Cllr Clare discussed with Cllr Allcock – he recognised that as a non-overall control administration he’s happy take a view from the panel on what the service needs to look like.</p> <p>Cllr Wares thanked the chair and officers for these updates. He explained that he and Cllr Mears felt there were still some outstanding matters. Regarding the overspend they would like to see further detailed breakdown especially within figures like the £404,000. They would also like to request an analysis for the panel on why each route was handed back. What were the details around what happened when they were handed back – were there higher costs associated as a result. With regards to the LGA report, they would like the detailed shared on what was asked to be changed.</p> <p>ACTION: Cllr Clare agreed those matters could be taken forward to a future meeting.</p> <p>The action points from the previous meeting were agreed.</p>
<p>Focussed discussion 1: Arrangements for September</p>	<p>Regan provided a brief overview. She explained that Bob Wall is also in the meeting, who has been working on the training offer and she’ll invite him to provide an overview of that too.</p> <p>Regan explained that the government have asked for all children to go back to school in September. There is likely to be a phased approach at our special schools but by end of September all children should be back on transport. The team have worked with</p>

the issued guidance and developed the following principles of service delivery in September:

- Maintained distance where possible on vehicles and reduce numbers on vehicles
- Maintain consistency of service for families eg retain drivers and VPAs were at all possible
- Get children to school in a timely manner

Regan explained that her team were working to reduce the need to use back to back journeys for the operators (as this means some children arrive too early or too late) and reducing the need to use new/out of city firms wherever possible too.

Regan concluded that the main issue the service was facing was a potential shortage of VPAs – it's a hard role to recruit to for the operators. With one firm the advert was also placed on the council website and Regan has made that offer to other operators. She's also gone out to sessional staff in the council asking them if they'd like this additional paid work. The intention is to have a bank of council staff available that can be used to fill any possible gaps.

Cllr Wares thanked Regan and asked the operators to contribute if they had anything to add, he was keen to hear from them as to whether they felt ready. Do they have the right PPE, are their DBS checks likely to be ready on time? He was also interested to hear more about the move to employ VPAs within the council – he queried whether this was the beginnings of a wider in-house model? He was also keen to hear from schools about how they feel about the start of term – are matters such as site marshalling all in hand?

Regan said that she didn't anticipate a PPE problem, operators were able to get PPE if required, if they were unable to source from elsewhere. There is no requirement to wear full PPE but it is accepted that it may be a sensible precaution. The team are working with the schools to resolve and had received positive responses to a recent survey.

Action: Following a questions raised by an operator it was agreed that an update on PPE would be shared with the panel.

Rachel Burstow added that plans for September were falling in to place at her school.

Cllr O'Quinn asked for clarification on the physical distancing and what happens if there is symptomatic cases. Regan explained that we were aiming to maintain distancing where possible but speaking with families where there may be occasions where it's not possible. Operators and families have had advice on how to manage

symptomatic cases and there have been a few scenarios already which have been managed.

Cllr Wares added that all operators should be complying with the blue book.

Action: it was agreed that the panel would get an update on where DBS checks were at for September.

Cllr Wares asked about the potential in-house VPAs and asked about how they'd be trained. He asked for details on what specific training they might receive. Regan explained that there was a suite of core in-house training which the new VPAs could receive, then specialist training on specific conditions eg epilepsy can be arranged as needed – as would be done for any staff member.

Andy Cheeseman added a comment about potential symptomatic cases and the difficulties this presents operators and the individual drivers because of their inability to work for 7 days. During the pandemic so far some cases have been supported by the LA but an agreed approach on this was needed.

Action: HTST service to agree an approach with operators on how to manage / support cases where drivers / VPAs need to self isolate.

Fiona England added that PaCC were very supportive of the intention to maximise space between children where possible and this fits with some longer term concerns they have raised previously. Some operators have raised a concern that it can be difficult for a SEND child or young person to take a Covid test due to anxiety or complications with their conditions/needs. Regan agreed and all suggested that a discussion outside of the meeting would be helpful on this. Cllr Mears wondered if temperature testing might be part of that approach.

Action: an agreed approach to be reached if possible on supporting the children and young people in reception of HTST to take Covid tests when appropriate.

Bob Wall joined the discussed and explained that separate from his role on the management committee for the connected hub, he was also working with Regan in an advisory role to support the development of the city's HTST training offer – a mixture of face to face and online options.

Feedback has been received that face to face is ideal however it is understood that that will be difficult at the moment although some sessions are hoping to be run later in the year. Until then an online training offer is being developed. The other advantage of online training is there is a better record of who has undertaken it, however it was acknowledged that it is possible for one person to log into the training and another to complete it. Some operators were looking to have some staff join together to complete their

	<p>training. Bob explained the breadth of the training – some of it will be core requirements like health & safety, equalities, safeguarding etc. Then there will be more specialist elements for types of need and then some will be signposting for further specialist support eg gender reassignment.</p> <p>Andy Cheeseman thanked Regan and Bob for the work they were doing pulling this difficult task together. He shared that the council last had a full training over 8/9 years ago so it is an undertaking to create a new offer now. Cllr Wares also thanked officers for their work on this. He acknowledged that stakeholders were working together to fix a problem that may never be totally resolved however he didn't want to see anything that was simply the 'good enough' solution. He wanted to continue to see a raising of standards and this should include in time a face to face training offer if that is considered to be the most effective model. Bob reassured that operators had already in the past received a breadth of training so there was not a starting from nothing position. What we were looking to do here now is to establish a common set of expectations when delivering HTST in the city.</p> <p>The group discussed pupil information sheets and operators asked when all the details may be shared with them. Regan explained that there was a new system whereby parents/carers only need to give information if it was new or amended, this saved them time and supports the principle of 'tell your story once'. Fiona also supported an approach that didn't require families to resubmit information regularly, but recognised the importance of a system that enables operators to get the most up to date information on the children, including risks or updates on their health. Regan explained that the service were in the process of changing the system, in liaison with PaCC where we want to strike a balance of not harassing families but also enabling operators to have the right amount of information to deliver a safe service. She also explained about the new 'child passports' that were being developed – enabling a combined application, risk assessment process – and that should provide further reassurance on this matter.</p> <p>Action: it was agreed that Regan would present an update on this to a future meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Clare concluded that the service and arrangements with schools and operators are clearly in a more comfortable situation than this time last year. We accept that there will always be some difficulties and challenges in this work but we've seen evidence of greater collaborative work to get better solutions in place and she wanted to thank stakeholders for that.</p>
<p>Focussed Discussion 2 (45 mins)</p>	<p>Community Transport had provided a submission directly to the Chair ahead of the meeting. Provided below.</p>

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Letter for BHCC
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Tom Druitt provided an overview of the proposal, which comes from the position of potentially being able to rebuild the process from the start.

The proposal is around contracts being provided to manage whole schools, rather than individual routes. So an operator takes responsibility for a schools arrangements, linking with other operators to deliver some of the runs within that. This allows for schools and operators to use their expertise to tailor the approach needed. Operators can then make swift changes 'on the group' as needed, and can link directly with the HTST and families on those matters.

This allows for greater flexibility and could potentially enable to cheaper service due to sensible efficiencies. It would allow operators the ability to plan ahead and solve that issue of certainty around investments which is currently difficult with the existing contract model.

Tom added that this year is better in terms of planning, whereas previously it was difficult to know in good time how many children would need transportation and the details of the routes.

He also added that there would not be a desire to go back wholly to the old framework agreement as that created some budgetary issues such as operators not being paid if a child was unwell for a day – this was unhelpful as the overheads for the operators was broadly unaffected in that scenario, drivers and VPAs still needed paying.

Cllr Wares thanked Tom for his contributions to the discussions and asked for other operators to share their views on this. He was interest to understand more about what that means in terms of operators being self managing. He also wanted to be clear about how to get the balance of putting children's needs first and the need to achieve value for money in future models. The city needs and deserves a brilliant service.

Andy Cheeseman added that there were some good things from the previous arrangements that might helpfully be reintroduced. He supported the view that an alternative arrangement could help lesson the overall spend on HTST for the city.

Cllr Clare thanked Tom for the letter and suggested and agreed that it continues to be the panels view that looking at a possible hybrid model for the future would be something they are interest in doing during a panel meeting. It was felt important to receive the CE report first as that will inform those considerations.

	Action: it was agreed that a wider discussion on potential alternative future arrangements to be on a future meeting agenda.
AOB	None raised.
Date of next public meeting	Future meeting dates to be determined and shared.

