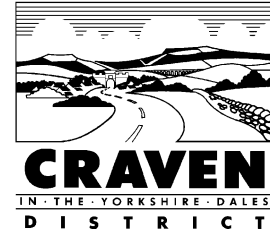


Policy Committee – 9 June 2015

Skipton Bus Station Management Agreement



Select Committee Chairman's Report

Skipton Bus Station Management Agreement

Introduction

Policy Committee will be aware that in February 2015, Select Committee agreed to examine the terms of a proposed management agreement with North Yorkshire County Council in respect of Skipton Bus Station. In undertaking that piece of work the Committee also took the opportunity to discuss other issues of interest regarding the bus station. This report is intended to formally present to Policy Committee the outcome of Select Committee's work.

Consideration of the Proposed Agreement and Other Matters

On 11th February 2015, the Committee received copies of a draft Policy Committee report detailing the terms of a proposed management agreement between the Council and North Yorkshire County Council for the long term management of Skipton Bus Station. The Committee concluded its discussion at a second meeting held on 11th April 2015.

Following a full refurbishment in 2008 funded by North Yorkshire County Council under its Local Transport Plan, management arrangements for Skipton bus station had operated on an informal basis, however, following works to ensure the shelter and doors were compliant with British Standards, the County Council had asked that those arrangements be placed on a formal footing. Once formalised, it is understood the County Council will make a contribution of 50% (£7,500) towards the cost of the above shelter improvements. Hence the need to put an agreement in place.

The proposed agreement identified the tasks and responsibilities assigned to this Council and the County Council respectively. In responding to Members' questions the Assets and Project Manager indicated that amendments to the proposed agreement would be taken forward to provide clarity on such matters as responsibility for future replacement lighting and to cover the possibility of CCTV being installed at a future date. All tasks assigned to this Council were currently being undertaken. As drafted the agreement included provision to ensure that the site would continue to be used as a bus station for a period of at least 20 years from 20th December 2008. The site is owned by this Council and in the unlikely

event that the Council were to sell the site, the sale would be subject to a restrictive covenant to ensure that commitment was honoured. This aspect of the proposed agreement was the subject of some discussion and concern, particularly in the event of the level of usage reducing to the point where the need for a bus station in the current form could be brought into question. The County Council's initial response to a suggestion, put to it at the Select Committee's request, that a condition be included in the proposed agreement to the effect that if the level of bus services using the station fell below an agreed level, the proposed restrictive covenant therein would not apply, was that such a condition may not be acceptable. A commitment by this Council to some form of future provision in the event of the site being sold may have been more acceptable.

The options available to this Council therefore appeared to be

- a. Not sign the proposed management agreement and potentially forego a contribution (£7,500) from the County Council for works carried out to ensure the bus shelter and doors were compliant with British Standards;
- b. Sign the proposed agreement as drafted; or
- c. Agree and sign an amended agreement which incorporated an appropriate form of words regarding future provision.

Details requested by the Committee on the level of usage and income derived from departure charges in the period 2007 to 2015 showed a reduction in the number of departures per annum from 55,432 to 44,345. For 2014-15 the allocated bus station budget (excluding expenditure on the public conveniences) had amounted to £35,710, this included provision for annual maintenance of £1,250 and reactive maintenance of £12,000. Income from departure charges had totalled £15,521.

In considering the draft management agreement the Committee took the opportunity to establish the position with regard to provision of replacement public conveniences and the potential to use the bus station for tourist coach parking / as a drop off and pick up point. The Committee was advised that

- a. Work was currently being carried out on a scheme to replace the public conveniences plus accommodate a small retail unit within the approved budget. Subject to completion of the current phase of the Town Hall project in May, the Property Team would be in a position to proceed with procurement of a replacement toilet block comprised of two female and two male toilets and a small kiosk in late June 2015. The current intention was to provide something more user friendly than the existing facility.
- b. Under the terms of the agreement at Para 6 "other services" did not mean tourist coaches could use the bus station for dropping off / picking up and parking. The bus station did not have sufficient capacity to accommodate tourist coaches drop off/pick up as well as timetabled buses, The County Council had also stated that it would not be prepared to accept a change to the site to a coach drop off facility at the expense of the timetabled buses

The Committee also heard that problems were being experienced with vandalism in different parts of the bus station. Incidents were reported to the Police who had enjoyed some success. CCTV is not currently provided in the bus station.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Little would be gained by not progressing with an agreement, if accepting the proposed agreement. Policy Committee need to be conscious of the provisions with regard to any disposal of the site within the period ending December 2028, but on balance it is recommended

That, bearing in mind uncertainty as to the future shape of local government and the need to protect the future provision of a bus station in Skipton, Policy Committee is recommended to accept the proposed Skipton Bus Station management agreement, as drafted, subject to the changes being progressed by the Assets and Project Manager.

Conscious of the vandalism being experienced and the late evening environment in the bus station / Waller Hill area at certain times of the week, Members were of the view that consideration should be given to installation of some form of CCTV recording equipment, possibly as part of the works to install replacement conveniences and a kiosk. It is therefore also recommended

That, in consultation and collaboration with the Licensing Committee, the Policy Committee is asked to request a report presenting options and potential costs to enable consideration to be given to the possible installation of CCTV recording equipment covering the Skipton Bus Station and Waller Hill taxi rank.

Councillor David Staveley
Chairman Select Committee