

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION:**

COMMITTEE: BUS NETWORK AND PTE SERVICES
DATE: 7th AUGUST 2009
SUBJECT: HATTERSLEY POINT 2 POINT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT
REPORT OF: INTERIM BUS AND RAIL DIRECTOR, GMPTE

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the progress of the Hattersley Local Link and the Point to Point (P2P) Community Transport services in Hattersley and to recommend grant funding the service for a further three years.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to:-

- (a) Note progress to date of the Hattersley Local Link service
- (b) Agree to continue to fund the service from the Authority's subsidised services budget for 3 years with a view to extending to five years, if targets set by GMPTE are achieved, from November 2009.
- (c) Receive further progress Reports as part of the six monthly DRT monitoring and evaluation process

Background Documents

The Authority – Rural Bus Challenge: bid/progress reports (2003 to date).
TNC - Community Transport in Hattersley. 11th August 2006

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Hattersley Point 2 Point Community Transport

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2003 the ITA was successful in bidding for Rural Bus Challenge (RBC) monies to establish a door to door community transport operation in the Hattersley area of Tameside. The RBC funding not only meant the establishment of a new Community Transport service in the area, working with community groups but also enabled the establishment of a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) door to door service, The Hattersley Local Link. Whereas the Community Transport supported community groups, the Local Link provided journeys for individual passengers helping them to access key destinations such as education, employment, health and fresh food shopping.
- 1.2 The Local Link service proved to be successful and in November 2006 the ITA agreed to continue to fund the Hattersley Local Link for a further 3 year period. £223,936 was allocated until November 2009. This sum was reduced by £50,000 from the total approved by the Authority to take account of a subsequent grant for that amount from the Hattersley Neighbourhood Partnership (HNP), over the first 2 years.
- 1.3 In January 2008, GMPTE officers were made aware of inappropriate actions of a former manager at P2P which had significant financial implications. The manager left the company and Police action followed.
- 1.4 Both GMPTE officers and HNP were keen to understand why such an incident could have happened. After lengthy discussions between the P2P management board, Tameside MBC, HNP and GMPTE officers it was agreed that there were fundamental weaknesses in the governance of P2P Board. It was therefore decided that the best option for the future was to seek expressions of interest to take on the Local Link and Community Transport services as a package, inclusive of operational, management and governance considerations. Subsequently, a Panel consisting of a Tameside MBC Assistant Director, representatives of the P2P board, HNP and a GMPTE officer received presentations and then interviewed the three short listed operators. Unanimously, the Panel agreed to award to the Greater Manchester Accessible Transport Limited (GMATL).
- 1.5 It should be noted that during the transitional period of change of governance from the original P2P Board to GMATL, the GMATL Directors and staff worked extremely hard to ensure a seamless transition and ensure that passengers were unaffected. Likewise, GMATL put in place robust policies and procedures that enabled the P2P Community Transport brand to flourish and the Hattersley Local Link to develop. The time, effort and dedication in making both the P2P brand and Hattersley Local Link work by GMATL is recognised by partners.

1.6 This report sets out progress to date of the Local Link service, highlights the strengths of operation, the value of the Hattersley Local Link for the residents of Hattersley and the rationale for continuing to support the service by means of a grant in partnership with HNP and Tameside MBC.

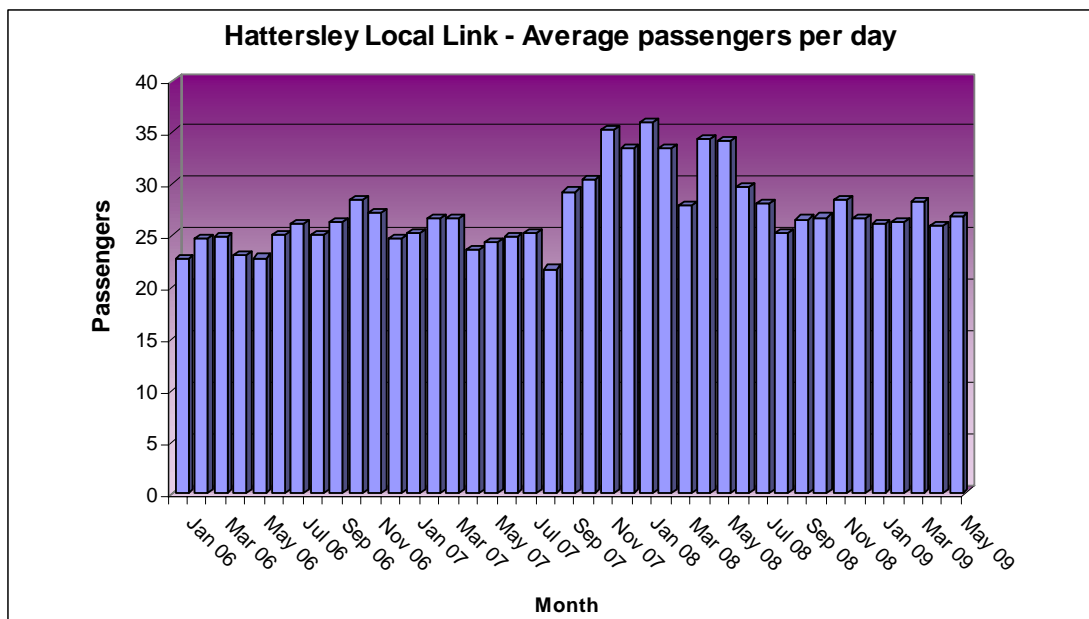
2 PROGRESS OF THE SCHEME TO DATE.

2.1 P2P Community Transport and the Hattersley Local Link are a well respected and much needed resource in Hattersley. Because of the geographical nature of the estate local residents can become more isolated due to lack of transport and time of day they wish to travel. The Local Link service operates Monday to Friday 07.30 to 22.00, Saturdays 08.30 to 22.00 and Sundays and public holidays 09.30 to 20.30. The following destinations are served

- Ashton under Lyne Sixth Form College
- Ashton town centre
- Dunkinfield
- Hyde Hospital
- Hyde Nursing Home
- Hyde town centre
- Stalybridge town centre
- Tameside General Hospital
- Hattersley train station
- Godley train station

2.2 There have been over 33,000 passenger journeys on the Hattersley Local Link service between January 2006 and May 2009. Table 1 gives an overview of passenger figures per day on the service.

Table 1



- 2.3 In April 2009 GMPTE commissioned qualitative research recognising that in many cases without the Local Link service many local residents would be unable to access key destinations such as education, employment, health and fresh food shopping.
- 2.4 Satisfaction levels proved extremely high with passengers; 100% felt the driver was helpful, with 100% arriving at their destination on time, 97% were satisfied with the overall journey experience whilst 97% were satisfied with value for money aspect of the service. 97% of respondents felt safe and secure, whereas 97% were satisfied with the door to door element of the service and 96% of respondents were satisfied with the reliability of the service and 97% satisfied with the destinations served.
- 2.5 65% of journeys were to the key destinations of health, food shopping and work, whilst 25% of respondents stated that they would be unable to make the journey if the service was not available. This research demonstrates the value of the Local Link service for the residents of Hattersley, however, there is still a need to ensure that the service is well publicised and, if the grant is extended, a robust publicity and promotion campaign will take place.

3. The Grant Award

- 3.1 Details of the proposed grant award can be found in the Forthcoming Changes to the Bus Network Report in Part B of this agenda.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The P2P Community Transport and Local Link services has been in operation since 2003 and supported since 2006 by the ITA and HNP. Recent surveys suggest that these are popular services in an area which is geographically isolated. Although a serious issue occurred with the then Manager, the fact that Tameside MBC, GMPTE and HNP acted swiftly to ensure there would be no adverse affect on passengers, is evidenced by the continuing high levels of user satisfaction.
- 4.2 Since being awarded the grant to operate the service GMATL have provided a quality Local Link, Community Transport service and management package for the benefit of local residents. HNP and Tameside MBC have shown further commitment to the project and agree to contribute to the costs for a further three years.
- 4.3 Officers believe that a grant award is required to enable GMATL the time to develop the project further and to establish a time of stability after the recent challenges. Robust monitoring and evaluation will take place and if all outputs set by GMPTE are achieved then the grant will be extended beyond the 3 year

period for a further 2 years in agreement with HNP. This coupled with a strong publicity and promotion campaign suggests that the Hattersley Local Link will continue to develop and expand in the Tameside area remains a vital resource for local residents.

5. Recommendations.

5.1 See front sheet for recommendations

Michael Renshaw
INTERIM BUS AND RAIL DIRECTOR