

Vic Thomson sends further information – Members question regarding bus services

Question - Can the Chairman of EDT provide Councillors with a list of all the bus services in Norfolk that have seen their subsidy removed or reduced by Norfolk County Council in the past 10 years and can the Chairman confirm the rationale used to determine which services were affected and to what extent?

Answer - Some bus services had subsidy reduced or removed in the period 2010/11, as a result of budget reductions in that period of financial planning. These are a matter of public record. Due to negotiation and partnership working, only 2 routes were ceased from a total of more than 70.

In terms of rationale, **we look at the services on a route by route basis**. We assess the geographical need, and other factors based on rural deprivation. We also take into consideration the following:

Who is using the services?

- The number of users on a particular route
- Levels of income of those who use the route
- Levels of car ownership within the area of the route
- The age range of people within the area of the route
- The proportion of residents on the route who may be experiencing difficult social conditions

The impact of changes to routes

- Availability of alternative transport, i.e. rail, other bus or community based transport services,
- Is the route used by many older or disabled people?
- Does the route offer journeys to work or education?
- Can we reduce the frequency, rather than the whole service?

Other considerations:

- Will the bus operator be able to run the service without the council's financial support?
- Is renegotiation around cost of services possible?
- Is replacement of services with a "Demand Responsive" or "Feeder" arrangement possible e.g. involving Community Transport providers?
- Value for Money, comparing cost of service with passenger usage
- Could we raise fares?
- Could we reduce the service on Sundays and evening's services, when usage is much lower?