



# LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

## Planning and Transport Committee

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**Date:** 8 June 2022

**Title:** Bus Users

**Purpose of the Report:** To consider the most appropriate way the Town Council can encourage the creation of a stand-alone bus user group to represent local views on issues concerning public transport which in turn would be fed into the pan-Bedfordshire user group which includes representation from Local Authorities other user groups as well as public transport providers.

**Contact Officer:** Mark Saccoccio - Town Clerk

<b>Corporate Objective/s</b>		To continue to support a thriving, vital and successful town through a town planning partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council and initiatives including management of the street market, support for local businesses, town and community promotions, and town centre enhancements.
<b>Implications:</b>		
<b>Financial</b>	No	Anticipated that any user group created would be entirely self-governing and self-run.
<b>Operational/Service delivery</b>	No	Anticipated that any user group created would be entirely self-governing and self-run. The town council to offer the use of its meeting rooms should the group wish to meet here,

### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Planning and Transport Committee be minded:-

1.1 To note the report:

1.2 To agree to and encourage the creation of a stand-alone bus user group whose purpose would be to raise local issues with the pan-Bedfordshire user group which includes representation from Local Authorities other user groups as well as public transport providers.

1.3 To work with the Leighton Buzzard Society Transport Officer and up to 3 councillors to encourage and create a stand-alone bus user group.

- 1.4 **That the Town Clerk liaises with the Central Bedfordshire Council Public Transport Manager to understand what support it can offer in the encouragement and creation of local user groups as well as the frequency of the pan-Bedfordshire forum meetings.**
- 1.5 **To use town council social media platforms as well as its bi-monthly parish magazine to raise awareness and encourage bus users to participate in the creation and thereafter participation of a bus user group.**

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At its meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Council resolved: “To receive suggestions from the Town Clerk regarding means of regular consultation about local bus services”.
- 2.2 To this end and by invitation, the Public Transport Manager – Central Bedfordshire Council attended the Planning and Transport Committee meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Its purpose, to better understand the mechanisms the local authority has in place to engage with public transport user groups at a parish level.
- 2.3 The Public Transport Manager confirmed that there was an aspiration to create a pan-Bedfordshire passenger advisory group. The pan-Bedfordshire Group would be run in conjunction with Luton and Bedford Borough Councils. Its purpose to raise awareness as to bus service issues directly with the bus operators as well as with the local authority in its statutory public transport capacity.
- 2.4 Whilst this user group would work at a strategic level, it was clear that the grassroot views and opinions would be welcomed. The idea of creating a local user group who would then feed into the strategic pan Bedfordshire forum was also welcomed.
- 2.5 Following from the discussion with The Public Transport Manager, the Planning and Transport Committee resolved for the Chair of the Committee and the Town Clerk to meet with the Transport Officer of the LB Society to consider next steps in relation to bus users and to report back to a future meeting of the committee.
- 2.6 Said meeting took place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May. It was suggested that the most appropriate way of garnering local opinion was through the creation of a bus user group. In his presentation, the CBC Public Transport Manager stressed that for the bus user group to have credence, it should be led by bus users whose experiences would then feed into pan-Bedfordshire passenger advisory group forum. It was anticipated that once established, the local bus user group would nominate a representative who would then sit on the strategic pan-Bedfordshire passenger advisory group forum.
- 2.7 Whilst the town council has no responsibility (statutory or otherwise) for the delivery of bus services, the town council would encourage the creation of a bus

user group through awareness raising (social media platforms, press release and its bi-monthly newsletter). The expectation being that the bus user group would be entirely self-governing and self-run being responsible for its own administrative functions for example. What support the Local Authority can provide is a matter for further discussion as set out at recommendation 1.4.

- 2.8 To support the group, the town council would be able to offer the use of meeting rooms should the group decide, they would wish to meet here. It may well be that several councillors may choose to join the group in its early stages to provide momentum.

### **3 NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 Should the Planning and Transport Committee support the bus user group principle, a further conversation with the Local Authority is advised. Its purpose to understand what support it could offer in the formation of a user group, the frequency of pan-Bedfordshire user group meetings. These tasks could be delegated to officers to report back to this committee in due course.

**End.**