

**Sustainable Communities Act 2007****Proposal Summary Form****Date of Panel Meeting: Wednesday 27 May 2009****Name of proposer or organisation**

Transition Exeter Transport Group

**Summary of proposal**

Integrated transport – Legislation enabling Exeter City Council to take responsibility for providing an integrated transport system in the local area.

**Details of Consultation carried out**

Discussions have taken place at the Exeter Transport Conference (9/5/09) and proposal approved by Campaign for Better Transport Exeter group.

**Officers Comments**

The proposal envisages a system of franchising local bus services, subsidising fares, creating an integrated ticketing system and co-ordination of bus and rail services. It also, in effect, proposes making the City Council a highway authority in order to plan and deliver this integrated system.

The benefits of a fully integrated and co-ordinated public transport system have long been argued by transport planners and many local authority Members. The key stumbling blocks are as follows:

- The 1985 Transport Act is grounded on the notion that most bus services will be provided by private operators; that local authorities will commission a residual collection of socially necessary bus services; and that fares are set by the market.
- Both the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission have been much more concerned to ensure there is open and transparent competition between modes of transport rather than co-ordination.
- Any franchising system with fares set below current levels will require big increases in revenue support funding.
- The major UK bus operators have consistently opposed any significant amendments to the statutory framework.

On the current boundaries of the City and with only County Councils (and Unitaries) designated as Highway Authorities, an Exeter City focused co-ordination role would not deliver what the proposers are seeking. Either the creation of an Exeter Unitary on a wider boundary or a lead responsibility for Devon County Council would be a necessity for effectiveness within any changed framework for local transport.

In terms of taking this forward it would require the full involvement of Devon County Council and, whilst consultation with operators would be sensible, it is unlikely that their support would be forthcoming. The Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Passenger User Groups would all be important consultees.

### **Panel Questions/Comments**

- How would local authorities achieve the complexities around such a scheme?
- The scheme could give local people greater power to have their say about transport needs.
- There may be a barrier engaging Stagecoach and other operators nationally but the model does run successfully in some areas.
- If bus services were returned to local authorities, they could decide on service frequency, fares and integration issues.
- If integration does not include rail, what would happen if they change a service? More research needed.
- Integrated transport systems generally rely on significant state investment.
- A lot more consultation to do before taking forward to SCA at a later round.

### **Supported/Not Supported by Panel and reasons**

Unanimous support for this idea, but request that it is further developed with more consultation with relevant partners and brought back to next SCA panel in three months time. Prepare for submission to next round of SCA.