

## ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> February, 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Flintshire County Council's Response to the Welsh Government White paper 'Improving Public Transport'
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside; and Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation); and Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government (WG) issued a consultation white paper in December 2018, on their plans to improve public transport in Wales. The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the Welsh Government legislative proposals for reforming the planning and delivery of local bus services in Wales, together with the licensing of taxis and other private hire vehicles.

The closing date for responses is 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019. (Consultation reference WG36240).

This report provides Environment Overview and Scrutiny with the opportunity to comment on the proposals within the White Paper before Cabinet approves the formal Council's response to the consultation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny notes the WG consultation and supports the Council's proposed responses.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE AUTHORITY'S STATUTORY DUTY AND PROCESS UTILISED TO ASSESS THE TRAVEL NEEDS OF PUPILS.</b>
1.01	Welsh Government (WG) issued a consultation White Paper in December 2018, on their plans to improve public transport in Wales. The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the Welsh Government legislative proposals for reforming the planning and delivery of local bus services in Wales, together with the licensing of taxis and other private hire vehicles.
1.02	<p>There are 10 proposals within the report which are summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A proposal to establish Joint Transport Authorities (JTAs) in Wales.</li><li>2. Provide powers for Councils to enter Enhanced Quality Partnerships with transport operators</li><li>3. Revise legislation to make franchising bus routes a useable option for Councils</li><li>4. Revise legislation to allow Councils to operate their own bus service.</li><li>5. Increase the eligibility age for the mandatory concessionary fares scheme, to bring it in line with a woman's pensionable age.</li><li>6. Put in place information monitoring and sharing requirements on transport operators</li><li>7. Set national standards for taxi and private hire licensing.</li><li>8. Allow a licensing authority to take enforcement action against any non-compliant vehicle operating their area.</li><li>9. Create a mechanism in order that information can be shared to purposes of safeguarding.</li><li>10. To redirect all existing taxi and PHV licensing functions away from local authorities and into a national licensing authority (JTA).</li></ol>
1.03	Proposals 7 – 10 refer directly to taxi licensing and the Council's response has been discussed by the Licensing Committee. The proposed response to the questions relating to these proposals are shown in Appendix 1 and are included for the benefit of this Committee.
1.04	The general proposed response to the proposals regarding public transport are as follows:
1.05	<p>A proposal to establish Joint Transport Authorities (JTAs) in Wales.</p> <p>Clearly transport does not end at the border between Councils and there is clear benefit from regional or sub-regional coordination and on that basis the proposals should be supported from a public transport perspective.</p>
1.06	<p>Provide powers for Councils to enter Enhanced Quality Partnerships with operators.</p> <p>These additional powers would be welcomed and help provide some long term security for operators and users of the key transport links.</p>

1.07	<p>Revise legislation to make franchising bus routes a useable option for Councils.</p> <p>This would be a useful (if expensive) tool and could be used as a final option where operators cannot provide a commercially viable service along specific and key routes.</p>
1.08	<p>Revise legislation to allow Council's to operate their own bus service.</p> <p>These additional powers would also be welcomed and the provision of a Council operated bus service would provide some financial balance on the routes where there are limited commercial options available.</p>
1.09	<p>Increase the eligibility age for the mandatory concessionary fares scheme, to bring it in line with a woman's pensionable age.</p> <p>The proposal is a national decision however the suggestion brings concessionary passes in line with pension eligibility.</p> <p>The Council welcomes the protection for existing pass holders</p>
1.10	<p>Put in place information monitoring and sharing requirements on operators.</p> <p>These additional powers would be welcomed and help provide service users with relevant and timely travel information.</p>
1.11	<p>The proposed detailed responses to each question within the consultation document are shown in Appendix 1.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>Staff resources may be impacted if specific duties transfer to the proposed JTA's however without full details the full impact cannot be evaluated at this stage.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	<p>With Cabinet Members.</p>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	<p>Not applicable.</p>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Suggested response to the consultation questions.</p>

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Stephen O Jones  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704700  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk">stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Andrew Farrow  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703201  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:andrew.farrow@flintshire.gov.uk">andrew.farrow@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	JTA – Joint Transport Arrangement.