

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Streetscene & Engineering Scrutiny Committee

20th July 2018

Report of the Head of Engineering and Transport

David W. Griffiths

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All

Overview of Community Transport in the NPTCBC Area

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with background information on third sector Community Transport (CT) organisations operating in the Neath Port Talbot area.

Executive Summary

2. There are two Community Transport schemes operating in NPTCBC. Valley areas of NPT are served by Dulais, Afan, Neath, Swansea & Amman community transport (DANSA), urban areas have Neath Port Talbot Community Transport (NPTCT). There is also a Shopmobility scheme which provides mobility scooters in Neath and Port Talbot town centres.
3. The service provided by these organisations primarily cater for the elderly, rurally isolated and residents with mobility issues.
4. Proposed changes in the recent Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on Section 19/22 permits could have a significant impact on the CT sector. There could also be a detrimental effect to CT with Welsh Government (WG) revue of the Bus Service Support Grant ((BSSG).

Background

5. NPTCT is the oldest established Community Transport scheme in the county; they have been in operation since 1985.

6. NPTCT are based at Milland Road Industrial Estate. They have five paid staff, 10 volunteers and eight vehicles.
7. The organisation operates two Town Rider schemes; they provided 670 group hires for eligible residents during 2016/17. They also undertake non-emergency patient transport contracts for the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU).
8. In 2017, NPTCT were unsuccessful in their Grant application for core funding from the Council.
9. DANSA is the larger of the two schemes with 22 vehicles and 29 staff. They also have two volunteers. DANSA operate out of Crynant Business Park and predominantly operate in the valley areas.
10. DANSA also operate three (demand responsive) local bus services; the X5 evening service serves Neath to Glynneath, the X26 daytime service serves Brynamman to Swansea and the 161 service operates Neath to Glynneath via Cilfrew.
11. As well as the local bus services, the organisation also has four school contracts with NPTCBC and during 2016/17 undertook 590 shopper trips and circa 300 group hires. They also have one ABMU contract which operators four times a week taking patients from the valley area to Tonna Hospital.
12. DANSA receive circa £110k in grants from the Council, £32k core funding from revenue and £78k from the region via Welsh Government's BSSG.
13. Commercial transport providers wishing to carry members of the public must apply for a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operator's Licence from the Traffic Commissioner (TC). The 'O' Licence is a legal requirement; this must be obtained prior to a company starting business. Similarly, Community Transport organisations operate on Community Transport Permits, there two permits CT operators providers can apply for.
14. The first is a Section 19 permit which can be issued to any organisation that operates without a view to profit. This includes, Education, Religion and Social Welfare, etc.

15. Section 22 permits are community bus permits and are issued to those bodies who run a local bus service without a view to making a profit. The bus services are open to the general public.
16. In early 2018, the DfT launched a consultation on the proposed changes in the guidance for use of the Section 19/22 permit schemes. This came about when in 2012 a legal challenge was mounted by the Bus and Coach Association (BCA). Their findings were taken to the European Union who issued infringement proceedings against the UK Government in April 2015.
17. The consultation closed early May 2018. Depending on the findings, the DfT have indicated there may be changes to the way the CT operators can use the permits. The changes proposed in the consultation could have a significant impact on the CT sector.
18. Welsh Government are also reviewing future funding of the Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG). DANSA receive over £78k from this grant. This funding could be at risk depending on the WG's review.
19. Shopmobility are based in Neath Multi Storey Car Park and Aberafan Shopping Centre. They provide scooters for eligible people to hire at reasonable rates. This service helps people with mobility issues access Neath and Port Talbot town centres.
20. Port Talbot has 19 scooters for hire and Neath has 18. Between the two locations, there are five paid part-time members of staff and three volunteers. In 2016/17 there were circa 1,600 members of the scheme. However, this has lately dropped to around 1,000 members.
21. Shopmobility currently receive a grant for core funding from NPTCBC of circa £36k.

Financial Impact

22. This report is for information only. A further report will be forthcoming depending on the outcome of the DfT consultation and the funding review by WG should there be an impact on the Council's budget.

Equality Impact Assessment

23. There are no equality impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impact

24. There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impact

25. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

26. There are no risk management issues associated with this report.

Consultation

27. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

List of Background Papers

28. None

Officer Contact

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