

a) STOCKTON SUPPORTS SHAKE UP ON THE BUSES

In an attempt to reverse the falling numbers of people using buses throughout the northern sub-region, Stockton Council today sent out a clear signal that something must be and will be done.

In partnership with the local bus operators, all Councils throughout the Tees Valley are in agreement that both the quality and speed of the services, which are provided, needs to be improved, so they have jointly sponsored a wide ranging review of service provision.

The review has been carried out of the entire Tees bus network, and its results seek to implement recommendations to change both the management and the delivery of public transport throughout the region.

Approval has been given at Stockton's Cabinet meeting today, to jointly apply for a Local Transport Plan Major Scheme Bid to achieve a step change in the quality of bus related infrastructure. A part of this will be to create a new Tees Valley Public Transport Unit, which will replace existing arrangements.

It is hoped to develop a "core routes" and "super core routes" strategy, so that services can more easily run across existing Council boundaries. Bus routes will be designed and emerge throughout 2006, although no clear timescale has yet been established, as this is pending acceptance by the partner authorities.

b) Just the ticket!

Review promises brighter future on Teesside's buses

Stockton Council's Cabinet has backed measures to bring about major improvements in the way bus services are delivered in the Tees Valley.

It has supported the recommendations of a major review into the way bus services are provided carried out by the TAS consultancy for the five Tees Valley councils earlier this year.

The review recommends a major shake up that will introduce core and super core routes with guaranteed levels of service enforced by contracts with operators. If endorsed by the other partner authorities in the Tees Valley, the review could even mean the introduction of a tram-like superbuss system on several routes if a joint bid for a major scheme is agreed and wins government backing.

Welcoming the decision, Stockton Cabinet member Bob Cook said 'The bus network review provides both local councils and bus operators with a strategy to make buses a far more attractive option than they currently are to the public. We want to achieve better performance and reliability, with more

modern low floor buses. We want to provide travellers with improved information, ticketing and secure waiting facilities. We will work with bus operators and the government to ensure that the Tees Valley is at the forefront of developing the bus as an environmentally sustainable alternative to the car, exploring the potential of alternative fuels, fuel cells and other green technologies as well as the latest information and ticketing technology’.

To oversee the development and implementation of the bus network review’s recommendations, Stockton has also backed the formation of a new Tees Valley wide Stakeholder Board, which will be supported by a new jointly funded Tees Valley Public Transport Unit if other councils support the proposals. ‘This will give us the management structure and support to deliver a modern integrated transport system throughout the Tees Valley sub-region’, added Cllr. Cook.

Ends.

Photos



Could this be the future on Teesside?

The Wrightbus Streetcar (left) and the Civis Guided bus (right) are just two of the modern Bus Rapid Transit systems that could be operating in the Tees Valley within a few years.

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Background.

The Tees Valley Bus Network review was commissioned by Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Darlington and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Councils, who were concerned at falling bus patronage and instability in the bus network.

Following invitations to submit proposals, the TAS consultancy was selected to carry out the study.

The Tees Valley local councils all contributed towards the study, providing funding and information. Local bus operators also provided much of the data used to produce the study's findings.

The study recommends a hierarchical bus network based on:

- Super core and core routes
- A secondary network
- A tertiary and rural network

These will be supplemented by inter-urban and express routes.

Following Stockton, the other Tees Valley Local authorities will also be considering the TAS study recommendations.

All local councils will need to incorporate proposals in the second Local Transport Plans, which have to be submitted in March 2006. It is hoped that the Tees Valley local authorities will jointly agree the main elements of a Bus Strategy for inclusion in their LTPs.

Copies of the main review report and the Cabinet report are available for downloading on Stockton Council's website.