

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD – 24TH SEPTEMBER 2009

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM VFM SCRUTINY GROUP TO CABINET –
TRANSPORT SERVICE REVIEW**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE & AUDIT

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of a meeting of the Value for Money Scrutiny Group held on 9th September 2009 at which the Transport Service Review report was considered.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Value for Money Scrutiny Group met on 9th September 2009. One of the items considered was the Transport Service Review report. Members of the VfM Scrutiny Group wish to make a number of recommendations to Cabinet following scrutiny of the report.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The VFM Scrutiny Group were disappointed that they were not directly consulted regarding the proposals prior to their presentation at Cabinet and did not have the opportunity to feed into the process.
- 3.2 The Group broadly welcomed the thrust of the Review, considering it to encapsulate the ethos of the VFM Scrutiny Group in maintaining or improving the standard of services whilst making savings.
- 3.3 Members felt a little uneasy with the terms of the contract and in particular whether the Council was obtaining best value for money from the fees payable to the consultants.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 **All future Service Review reports should be considered by the Value for Money Scrutiny Group prior to their consideration by Cabinet so that VfM Members' comments can be considered by Cabinet Members prior to final decisions being taken;**

- 4.2 The Group did not support the proposals for Post 16 travel given the comparatively low level of pupils accessing post 16 education, particularly in South Telford and wished to ensure that students and families were not disadvantaged by the Council requesting contributions towards transport costs;**
- 4.3 The Group echo the sentiments of the report with regard to, and stressed the importance of, a sympathetic and caring approach when dealing with potential redundancies and requested that necessary reductions in employee numbers be managed through redeployment and 'natural wastage' where-ever possible;**
- 4.5 The Group request that the services provided by Travel Link should continue to be provided (although not necessarily in the current form);**
- 4.6 The Group are concerned that transport provision for vulnerable people and looked-after children should be made in consultation with the Social Worker and that after reasonable challenge the final decision on the appropriate transport arrangements for these people should be made by the Social Worker;**
- 4.7 That the VfM group receive an update from the relevant Cabinet Member in 12 months time on progress made on implementation of the review;**
- 4.8 Once the initial package of service reviews have been completed, Members of the group would like to be consulted on the amount and basis of fees payable to consultants engaged to support any further service reviews.**