



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT TASK GROUP
(Star Trak)

Held: TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2008 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Russell – Task Group Leader

Councillor Bhavsar
Councillor Palmer

Councillor Hall
Councillor Porter

Also in Attendance

Andy Brookes
Jerry Connolly
Julie Harget
Councillor Patrick Kitterick

Campaign for Better Transport
Member Support Officer
Committee Services Officer
Cabinet Lead, Regeneration
and Transport

Bernard Marriott
Satish Shah

Campaign for Better Transport
Group Manager, Transport
Systems

David Wright

Team Leader, Star Trak Team

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9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Blackmore, Naylor, Newcombe, Thomas and Byrne.

Apologies were also received from Andrew Thomas, Head of City Development.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interest they may have in the business on the agenda.

No such declarations were made.

11. REVIEW OF INFORMATION GAINED FROM REVIEW

A report that outlined a summary of the Task Group Review into Star Trak was circulated to members of the Task Group. Councillor Russell gave a brief outline of the report to the meeting.

12. REVIEW OF INFORMATION FROM REGENERATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

Members considered the report on the analysis of early departures of buses at timing points. David Wright explained that the report showed that there was a problem with early departures, however the report only provided raw data and it was not an in-depth study into the reasoning behind the early departures. An example was given that if a bus stopped, then moved forward a few metres, this could be recorded as an early departure, which was inaccurate. The report therefore needed to be treated with caution. David added that bus operatives were working with the Council and he felt that there had been a real improvement since the figures were obtained.

13. CABINET RESPONSE ON STAR TRAK

Councillor Patrick Kitterick, Cabinet Lead for Regeneration and Transport was welcomed to the meeting and was invited to give his views on Star Trak.

Councillor Kitterick explained that representations in relation to Star Trak had been received from the Campaign for Better Transport. It was acknowledged that there were some problems with Star Trak, but it was considered that the problems did not warrant the system being terminated. The meeting was asked to note that the Council did not have any regulatory powers to sanction bus companies, where there were difficulties with the operating of Star Trak.

Difficulties with Arriva's Star Trak system were discussed and the meeting heard that Arriva had made a real effort to improve performance. The feeling was the management at Arriva had been very supportive, but there had been issues concerning maintenance of the hardware. Arriva used a number of different garages but First Bus did not have the same problem as all their buses were in one central depot. However, the employee at First Bus, who normally dealt with Star Trak had been sidetracked by management onto a CCTV issue, and there had been a delay in the installation of the necessary technology onto the remaining buses. It was anticipated that these buses would be fitted very soon. It was noted that the bus operatives had attended a meeting with Officers from the Council and had been very supportive of efforts to improve the system.

Difficulties with the actual running of the system were also raised, but the Chair stated that it was important to look at issues with Star Trak sequentially, and to get the buses fitted with the hardware first.

A Member stated that he considered that an accurate Star Trak system would encourage more people to use the buses. However, the meeting heard that there appeared to be a number of issues behind people's reluctance to use buses: These included:

- A lack of bus shelters
- Insufficient timetable information
- No cash/need for a card payment system
- Unfriendly drivers

David Wright explained that research had shown that Star Trak would not necessarily result in an increase in passenger numbers, however, it did indicate that users would be happier and therefore less angry with the driver.

14. CONCLUSIONS FROM REVIEW

The meeting considered a list of suggested recommendations for Members to make in respect of the review into Star Trak. The following main points were made:

Short Term Recommendations:

- Logical names were needed for bus stops; there were concerns that some bus stops had been given ambiguous or unhelpful names, which would confuse passengers.
- Timetabling information at the new bus stops on Causeway Lane were said to be excellent; the Chair to look at these.
- It was agreed that it was important that the partnership between the Council and the Bus Companies should continue.
- Bus Companies should be encouraged to use Star Trak buses wherever possible and they should be asked to guarantee the system on evening and Sunday buses.

Medium Term Recommendations:

- Centre Bus and the Park and Ride service should be encouraged to look at the feasibility of implementing Star Trak.
- The replacing of Star Trak signs with the new generation 2-way capacity signs should start with those signs that needed replacing. It was noted that it could take 6 – 7 years to replace all the signs, and in the meantime, it was suggested that it would be useful to display a notice at bus stops to inform members of the public who they could contact if they thought the Star Trak sign was not working.

Long Term Recommendations:

- The review of the performance of Star Trak against improvements made could possibly be held in 18 months time.
- For Star Trak to be expanded onto every route in the City, the bus companies would need to invest in the hardware.

A concern was expressed that the recommendations did not go far enough and did not address the requirements of members of the public. There was also a

request for a key recommendation of the Review to require Star Trak to be fitted on all buses on all routes and to be operational day and night. The Chair stated that it was important to ensure that the existing provision worked effectively before there was any expansion. This involved resolving any problems route by route in order to ensure that Star Trak was accurate, which would in turn build up public confidence in the system.

There was a concern that the Star Trak computers were not accurate, and also that although the tracking of buses appeared to work well, there were problems with the prediction of bus arrivals. David explained that it had been established that the problems lay with the buses and not the computers.

15. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.26 pm.