

***Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)***

***promoting quality public transport.....***

## **NEWS RELEASE – IMMEDIATE 19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015**

### **ALARMING THREAT TO BUS SERVICES IN LANCASHIRE**

TravelWatch NorthWest, the independent Community Interest Company representing users of all forms of public transport in NW England, is extremely distressed at proposals by Lancashire County Council, fostered by government spending cuts, to end **all** subsidy to bus services in the County.

Councillors will consider plans to cease the subsidy for bus services possibly with effect from as early as 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, impacting on 59 bus routes across the County.

Chris Dale, Chairman of TWNW said, “These savage cuts to public transport lifelines will exacerbate the loneliness and isolation of many people living in rural areas and are deplorable. The Council has a legal duty to consider social needs in supporting bus services and many people without access to a car rely on their bus for work, education and health care. We are not convinced that proposals to enhance support of parish and community based transport provision will be a viable alternative. The money would be better spent on conventional scheduled bus services.”

Cuts to bus services especially in rural areas is a major issue that should not be dealt with in isolation. There will be knock on effects on unemployment and housing benefit and healthcare issues. Local bus services reduce the cost of statutory transport otherwise provided by education, social services, health (and some retailers and employers). But these cross sector beneficiaries do not make any compensatory payments to the public transport sector.

We urge that, at the very least, **well publicised** consultation takes place with passengers – this has not happened in the past – and that all those people who are affected make their views known to their local councillors and MPs.

**ENDS**

***1. For further information contact Chris Dale on 07948 551809 or John Moorhouse on 07807 768124.***