

From: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)

To: Select Committee – Bus Transport – 2nd March 2017

Subject: **Bus Transport Select Committee – Final Report**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: The Committee is requested to consider and approve the final version of their report for submission to County Council.

Introduction

1. The Committee met with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport on Wednesday 15th February 2017, and received comments from them on the draft report. The Committee took account of the comments received and made a number of minor amendments to the draft report which have been incorporated into the latest version.

Timetable

2. Following the agreement by Members of the final version of the Select Committee report, the report will be presented to Full Council on 16th March 2017 for approval.
3. The report would normally be received by the Cabinet at a formal meeting prior to consideration at County Council. However, as there is not a timetabled meeting of Cabinet before 16 March, arrangements have been made to share the report informally with Cabinet Members and any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Recommendations

4. That the Committee's report be approved as the final version, subject to any minor amendments made at the meeting, and be submitted to County Council.

Appendix 1 – Report Recommendations

The recommendations are listed in priority order.

Recommendation 16

The Select Committee endorses the Bus Services Bill and strongly supports the franchising model of bus transport in particular. The Committee recommends a full investigation into the adoption, in Kent, of the most appropriate elements of the Bill. The adoption of any element of the Bill in Kent should reflect the features highlighted by the Committee.

Recommendation 17

The Committee believes that the Bus Services Bill should extend franchising powers to all local authorities in England and Wales and should allow the formation of municipal bus companies. The Committee recommends that KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport writes to the Secretary of State for Transport expressing these views.

Recommendation 1

Kent County Council should appoint a "bus panel", composed of a number of KCC Members, to review the current method of prioritising subsidisation of socially necessary bus routes, to make sure that it reflects the current needs of local communities more accurately.

Recommendation 2

KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport should write to the Secretary of State for Transport asking for a review of the calculation of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) funding to ensure that it is sufficient to cover the cost of the scheme in Kent.

Recommendation 3

The Select Committee urges KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to protect the discretionary element of the ENCTS scheme offered by KCC.

Recommendation 4

KCC's Public Transport division should work with bus operators to assess the viability of introducing the opportunity of upgrading the Young Person's Travel Pass to include bus travel during evenings, weekends and holidays.

Recommendation 5

KCC should:

- **Promote the establishment of a number of bus transport forums. The remit of these forums should be to discuss local bus transport-related issues and to identify possible solutions, which are then referred to Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) through formal communication channels.**
- **Ensure that at least one Kent County councillor is a member of each QBP, and that their attendance is formalised.**
- **Encourage all Kent QBPs to include all bus operators in their areas.**
- **Encourage all Kent QBPs to brief their respective Joint Transportation Boards on a regular basis on bus transport-related priorities, measures for intervention and achievements.**

Recommendation 6

KCC's Public Transport division should examine demand management measures, where feasible and appropriate, to ease traffic congestion and promote bus patronage in Kent.

Recommendation 7

KCC's Highways division should ensure clear lines of communication with bus operators to give them timely notification of roadworks and coordinate such programmes to minimise disruption to bus services. The Division should also investigate the feasibility of increasing the size of fines and using the income from utility companies that overrun roadworks programmes to improve the range of community bus provision for Kent residents.

Recommendation 8

KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport should lobby the Government, Network Rail and Train Operating Companies to include improved connectivity between bus and rail services in Kent as a key element of South Eastern's new franchise agreement in 2018.

Recommendation 9

KCC's Public Transport division should:

- **Seek greater financial contributions from local bus operators and businesses towards the provision and maintenance of local bus infrastructure.**
- **Encourage Kent districts to make greater use of the Community Infrastructure Levy to finance local bus infrastructure schemes.**

Recommendation 10

KCC's Public Transport division should strongly encourage local bus operators to:

- **Extend the range of their discounted fares, particularly for those on lower incomes.**
- **Expand their network coverage and service frequency, especially in rural areas, to better meet the needs of local communities.**

Recommendation 11

KCC's Public Transport division should identify and subsidise a number of bus services that would better serve selected rural communities and give them access to their nearest main towns on selected days.

Recommendation 12

KCC's Public Transport division should urge local bus operators to increase the deployment of smaller buses, particularly in congested Kent localities. In the case of KCC tendered services, the appropriate bus size should be specified within the commissioning process.

Recommendation 13

KCC's Public Transport division should make available an approved driving course to train a number of bus drivers to be employed by smaller bus operators in Kent.

Recommendation 14

KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport should reiterate to Arriva and Stagecoach the importance of the Connected Kent and Medway smartcard and should urge these companies to participate in the scheme.

Recommendation 15

KCC's Public Transport division should investigate:

- **Extending coverage of Community Transport operations in the County.**
- **Acting as a single point of information for all local transport provision and developing a database which holds up-to-date information on all community transport schemes in the County.**