

Buses Select Committee – Progress against Action Plan 2017

Recommendation	Progress to Date	Status	Comments	Lead Officer
<p>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.</p>	<p>A Member led review panel for the criteria has been proposed. This would have representation from the Select Committee and go through the Key Decision governance process.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Urgent progress required.</p>	<p>PL</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>This position has been communicated to Central Government on numerous occasions previously. A letter from the KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport will be progressed.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>As identified, the point has been documented but this is likely to be lost in the wider financial picture as this funding is received as part of the annual settlement and is not in itself identifiable any longer.</p>	<p>PL</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>This is believed to relate to the discretionary provision for companion passes. The view of the Select Committee has been relayed to the Cabinet Member. There are currently no plans to remove this offering.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>It is worth noting that in 2018 there is a need to renew 195,000 expiring ENCTS passes. A working group has been established in relation to this exercise.</p>	<p>PL</p>

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<p>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.</p>	<p>From Sept. 2017, Stagecoach offer all YPTP holders free evening and weekend travel. Similarly Chalkwell offer a £1 flat fare for all pass holders. KCC officers are currently encouraging Arriva to make a similar offer to pass holders from Sept. 18. Both offers are made commercially by the operators without the need for additional KCC reimbursement.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Evening and weekend travel was removed from the KCC offer when YPTP replaced KFP in 2014. Reintroducing this feature as part of the scheme would come at significant cost which is not budgeted. As such encouraging commercial offerings from operators is considered to be the only sustainable means of provision.</p>	<p>SP</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: KCC should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>KCC officers have raised this with bus operators through the Confederation of Passenger Transport (the formal trade body). In the east of the County, Stagecoach are investigating establishing forums in each of their operating Districts (as of 20.09.2017 Canterbury group almost ready to trial) and KCC are informing representation at these and their relationship with QBPs. KCC will chair the groups. In addition TWBC already host such a forum and it expected that Maidstone will follow suit. Other operator attendance at QBPs is</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Much of this recommendation was / is being progressed. The action plan in this area is to expand upon and replicate this across the County to ensure consistent coverage. Attendance of other operators at QBPS requires careful consideration. The QBP model works where an operator has a significant commercial network which can be used to reciprocate the efforts of local authority partners. Chalkwell are part of the</p>	<p>DB</p>

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	<p>being reviewed and where appropriate invitations will be extended.</p> <p>Attendance at QBPs has been reviewed and 5 of 8 already have County Member representation. Public Transport are liaising with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to establish how County Members at the remaining QBPs can be identified.</p> <p>Public Transport have liaised with the Highway Managers to identify how to link into JTB's in terms of reporting – This is likely to be achieved through the Highways Work Programme information raised at JTBS.</p>		<p>Swale QBP and there will be roles for others.</p> <p>This cannot however be an all operator forum.</p>	
<p>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.</p>		No progress	<p>Clarity around this recommendation is sought. Bus punctuality measures are picked up through KCC's Punctuality Improvement Partnerships (PIPS). Demand Management might suggest increased parking tariffs.</p>	TBC
<p>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</p>	<p>Both elements are being taken up for review with the appropriate part of Kent Highways.</p>	In progress	<p>Charging will be explored but PT's understanding is that this is difficult where the law is very prescriptive in terms of</p>	SP

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<p>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.</p>			<p>what can be charged, at what level and what any funding generated can be spent on.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>PT / Highways officers have been working with South Eastern to improve connectivity between rail and bus at many of Kent's Stations (e.g. West Malling / Ashford)</p> <p>KCCs formal response to the DfT consultation (May 2017) on the new South Eastern Franchise clearly established the authority position with respect to connectivity and gave equal importance to bus / rail as rail / rail connections.</p> <p>On a detail level - PT officers have already contributed to KCC's response to the draft timetables proposed under the new franchises. Responses included comments where there was an adverse reaction for connectivity and / or primary flows such as those for scholars.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Typically it would be more the case that buses can more easily adapt to connect with trains as opposed to the other way round.</p> <p>PT officers will continue to promote and encourage connectivity in future discussions / future consultation responses and will fight the public transport corner on infrastructure schemes at stations. e.g. as per Gravesend, Ashford</p>	DB
<p>Recommendation 9: KCC's Public Transport division should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek greater financial contributions from local bus operators and businesses towards the 	<p>Charging for bus stop infrastructure will be explored primarily with operators likely in the form of a departure charge. The extent</p>	In progress	<p>Charging for the maintenance of bus stops will be explored but is considered to carry risk.</p>	DB

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<p>provision and maintenance of local bus infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Kent districts to make greater use of the Community Infrastructure Levy to finance local bus infrastructure schemes. 	<p>to which this is supported by the law will need to be understood.</p> <p>PT officers have established regular meetings and closer working with KCC's Strategic Transport planners whom in turn inform responses to planning applications. On a more individual scheme basis – examples of contributions can already be seen – for instance Stagecoach committed funding to work at Ashford Station Forecourt and Polhill Garden Centre provided a bus shelter on its grounds to support the Go-Coach 431 service.</p>		<p>This is a relatively inexpensive activity and is also believed to be a statutory function. Charging operators could undermine the sustainability of some bus services and is contrary to the spirit of QBPs.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 10: KCC's Public Transport division should strongly encourage local bus operators to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>PT officers are always looking to encourage operators to develop services and offers that are attractive to customers. Offers in respect of YPTP are most realistic and are being progressed. Requests and opportunities for new and additional services are frequently taken to operators for commercial consideration when they are presented.</p>	On-going	<p>Ultimately, these will be commercial considerations for bus operators and there is no opportunity for LCC to compel operators to expand their offerings in either area. There is a tension between this recommendation and Rec. #11.</p>	SP
<p>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.</p>	<p>This approach could be picked up through recommendation #1 as it would need a different criteria and approach to support this.</p> <p>This sort of model is also being explored through the Total Transport project which</p>	In progress	<p>A change to the criteria and political support to this alternative provision would be necessary to support this change which would be sensitive with bus users.</p>	SP

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	is looking at a multi-modal “hub and spoke” model using the Weald area as a pilot.			
<p>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.</p>	<p>Stagecoach (in Ashford) and Arriva (in Sittingbourne) are respectively trialling the use of smaller buses in parts of their town networks. This will assist with understanding the benefits of this approach.</p> <p>KCC tendered services already specify the minimum requirement for bus capacities. This is typically governed by the peak (school) load and it can therefore be the case that vehicles operating in the off-peak are therefore bigger than strictly required. Some tenders can be issued requesting differing vehicle sizes dependent upon the time of the day.</p>	In progress	<p>With respect to KCC subsidised services, tenders can be issued with options for differing vehicle sizes bespoke to the size of the day. It is highlighted that this approach would likely generate additional cost where more than one vehicle will be required and will also generate additional positioning mileage in conflict with Rec. #6.</p>	SP
<p>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.</p>		No progress	<p>It is believed that this recommendation relates to industry feedback about the challenges recruiting and retaining licensed drivers. PT will engage with operators to understand how we can support them in this respect. The provision of a KCC run course is likely to be difficult</p>	SP

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			where this area is already heavily regulated with driver (CPC) training already a requirement.	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Pressure has continued to be applied to both operators to encourage participation and Arriva are expected to become part of the scheme imminently.</p>	<p>In progress</p>		<p>SP</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: KCC's Public Transport division should investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<p>KCC's new framework agreement for all PSV procurement has already attracted additional CT suppliers to it. PT are inviting Parishes to be the focus of our next CT forum and as part of this will make available funding and / or vehicles to encourage them to provide Community Transport Services. A tool-kit is also being developed to support them. 'Brokerage' is absolutely the right aspiration but will need to be explored in terms of feasibility. The CT forum and approaches to other LTA's will be used to explore this. A bid will be made to KCC's internal LTP pot for funding in 18-19 to facilitate a further community transport grant scheme.</p>	<p>In progress</p>		<p>SP</p>

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<p>Recommendation 16: The Select Committee endorses the Bus Services Bill and strongly supports the franchising model of bus transport. 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.</p>	<p>KCC's response to the Buses Bill consultation supports this view. A report to SCB explored the potential approach.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>The extent to which this is deliverable will be determined by the final bill and the powers afforded LTA's without Mayoral governance.</p>	<p>SP</p>