

Buses Select Committee –Action Plan Monitoring (updated 26.04.18)

Recommendation	Progress to date	Status	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 was proposed to Matthew Balfour.</p> <p>Matthew Balfour sent a number of review panel invites, to selected members.</p> <p>The new cabinet member, Mike Whiting, has been informed of the action and a follow up is in progress.</p>	In Progress	PL
<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>A letter from the previous Cabinet Member, Matthew Balfour, was sent.</p> <p>In addition, through the County Council Network, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport outlining the concern of the Network at the impact of ENCTS on authority budgets and with suggested mechanisms for tackling these pressures. The SOS response indicated that the scheme would remain as is.</p> <p>We are aware that a proposal is being developed for DfT within the SE7 authorities re ENCTS and how to tackle the budget implications.</p>	Complete & In progress through other groups.	PL
<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>	Complete	SP

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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.</p> <p>Arriva will from the 6th of May extend travel for YPTP holders 24/7 as per the Stagecoach offering.</p> <p>The commitment made by Arriva combined with the existing Stagecoach offer means that 90% of the bus network is accepting of YPTP at evenings and weekends.</p>	In progress	SP
<p>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 (QBP) through formal communication channels.</p>	<p>A pilot public transport forum is being launched in conjunction between KCC and Stagecoach for Canterbury in Autumn 2018.</p> <p>This may act as the model for other such forums elsewhere in the County and discussions have been had with other operators and the trade body – the Confederation of Passenger Transport.</p> <p>An existing TWBC forum already exists and Maidstone BC are also proposing to follow suit.</p>	In progress	DB

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<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>1) Ensure that at least one Kent County councillor is a member of each QBP, and that their attendance is formalised.</p> <p>2) Encourage all Kent QBPs to include all bus operators in their areas.</p> <p>3) 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>	<p>Proposals for formalising County Member attendance at all QBPs were made to the previous Cabinet Member and will be taken forward afresh with Mike Whiting</p> <p>Other operator attendance at QBPs is being reviewed and where appropriate invitations will be extended.</p> <p>Nu-Venture have been invited to join the Maidstone QBP and attended their first meeting in April.</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>	In progress	DB
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>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>	This is not an action that the Public Transport team can take forward.	No progress	TBC
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>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.</p>	Both elements are being taken up for review with the appropriate officers from Kent Highways.	In progress	SP

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<p>Recommendation 9 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	DB
<p>Recommendation 10 KCC's Public Transport division should:</p> <p>Seek greater financial contributions from local bus operators and businesses towards the provision and maintenance of local bus infrastructure.</p> <p>Encourage Kent districts to make greater use of the Community Infrastructure Levy to finance local bus infrastructure schemes.</p>	<p>Charging for bus stop infrastructure will be explored primarily with operators possibly in the form of a departure charge. The extent to which this is supported by the law will need to be understood and this will form the basis of a paper that is being prepared.</p> <p>PT officers have established regular meetings and closer working with KCC's Strategic Transport planners who in turn inform responses to planning applications.</p> <p>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>	In progress	DB

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<p>Recommendation 11 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.</p> <p>Offers in respect of YPTP are most realistic and are being progressed. It should be noted that we have kept the cost of the YPTP down for low income families at £100.</p> <p>Through discussions with Stagecoach, child fares were introduced at peak times on the Stagecoach network in 17/18. Prior to 17/18 there was no child fares at peak times, now children up to 16 go half fare and 16-19 go 75% full fare.</p> <p>Requests and opportunities for new and additional services are frequently taken to operators for commercial consideration when they are presented.</p>	On-going	SP
<p>Recommendation 12 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 type of model is also being explored through the Total Transport project which is looking at a multi-modal "hub and spoke" model using the Weald area as a potential pilot.</p> <p>And Total Transport forms one of the options to be discussed through the "Big Conversation" program, as outlined in recommendation 15.</p>	In progress	SP
<p>Recommendation 13 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>In respect of the Ashford scheme, Stagecoach will be replacing the minibuses from June, as growth on the network now means they need larger vehicles.</p> <p>KCC tendered services already specify the minimum</p>	In progress	SP

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	<p>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. As part of a forthcoming round of tenders for local bus services, Public Transport will pilot the structuring of tenders with separate vehicle requirements in the peak and the off peak. This will enable an understanding of how feasible this is and of any implication for cost.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 14 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>	<p>Some initial conversations have been held with some smaller operators who it is believed this recommendation is intended to support.</p> <p>Many of Kent's SME operators prefer to take drivers who already have an existing license and therefore interest in such a scheme has been limited.</p>	No progress	SP
<p>Recommendation 15 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>Dialogue with both operators is ongoing.</p> <p>The Smartcard is now available for us on the Arriva X1 service from Kings Hill and it is hoped that the remainder of the network will follow.</p>	In progress	SP
<p>Recommendation 16 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 	<p>KCC's new framework agreement for all PSV procurement has already attracted additional CT suppliers to it.</p> <p>Parish Councils were the focus of KCC's 2017 Community Transport Forums. These were held on the 2nd and 9th of November 2017. They attracted over 100 participants.</p> <p>At parish events, Public Transport launched its Community Transport toolkit for parishes and other organisations who want to become actively involved in providing transport. £200k of</p>	In progress	SP

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<p>on all community transport schemes in the County.</p>	<p>funding has also been identified for Parishes to bid for by means of pump priming and bids will be assessed in March / April 2018.</p> <p>To be launched in May/June 2018 is the “Big Conversation” program, which will focus on how rural links can be improved. The program will involve market engagement, focus groups, public meetings and on-line consultation mediums. The program will present a range of potential rural transport solutions and gain feedback on them. With the aim to develop pilots for implementation in 19/20.</p> <p>It needs to be noted that clarification provided by the Department for Transport relating to section 19 and section 22 permits limits the ability of the Council to make use of this sector for the performance of commercial work.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 17 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 Strategic Commissioning Board explored the potential approach.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken by the Public Transport in association with an independent consultant, which has highlighted an area of Kent, where it is felt a franchise network could be delivered sustainably.</p> <p>A report is to be presented to the SCB on this in July 2018.</p> <p>At this stage, no further detail will be provided due to the commercial sensitivity of franchising.</p>	In progress	SP