

		AGENDA ITEM 9
		PSEG/05/15
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	26 March 2015	
BUS AND PASSENGER TRANSPORT STRATEGY: GETTING AROUND IN ESSEX (Minute 6/ December 2014)		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 01245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

In November 2014 the Committee held a workshop on the Bus and Passenger Transport Strategy: Getting around in Essex to enable its members to learn more about the proposed Strategy and how it is being developed, as well as an opportunity to formulate some comments on the substance of the proposals and their implementation. A scrutiny report summarising the information exchanged at the meeting and conclusions reached was endorsed in December 2014 (Minute 6).

The scrutiny report was sent to Councillor Bass as Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, together with a number of questions that the Committee raised at the meeting. Prior to the launch of the consultation the following answers were forwarded to the Committee:

1. What is the revised timetable for the proposed consultation?

Cabinet Member Response: The next element of the consultation is planned to be launched on 5th February, for a period of eight weeks

2. What press coverage is planned for the launch of the consultation to raise broader awareness of the proposals?

Cabinet Member Response: Planned communications activity includes:

- *Written press releases circulated to all local press*
- *'Getting Around in Essex' paper circulated to Parishes for their newsletters, as well as featured in the libraries newsletter and website*
- *Updates to be made available on ECC website*

- *Announcement of the consultation and video content to be uploaded through Social media*
- *Adverts on library TV screens and computers*

This is in addition to a digital link and hard copies on request for County Members.

3. The Committee reaffirmed its wish that the County Council actively engage with service user groups as part of the Consultation, and proposed that the groups identified below be included in the list of bodies to be consulted:

- Passenger Focus
- Campaign For Better Transport
- Essex Association of Local Authorities
- Rural Community Council of Essex
- Hospitals and day centres

NB As part of evidence gathering for another review being undertaken by the Committee, public transport has been identified as a barrier to employment and economic growth by local Work Programme providers. Consequently the Task and Finish Group undertaking the investigation requested that SEETEC and Ingeus be consulted upon the proposed Strategy given some of the practical insight that they may provide through assisting individuals who may rely on public transport to access work opportunities across the county.

Cabinet Member Response: We will be sure to circulate the consultation to the suggested groups above.

4. How can Members acquire a printed copy of the Consultation documentation?

Cabinet Member Response: We will email a link to the digital version of the consultation to all County Members in advance of it formally going out. We will also provide hard copies to Councillors on request.

5. How will the consultation and Strategy be developed ie the project framework, in terms of the decision making process? This is important as it will assist the Scrutiny Committee in identifying its own role in that process

Cabinet Member Response: The area service reviews, which involve reviewing current bus networks, routes and frequencies, and developing customised local solutions will start from March 2015. Any changes to bus services which are proposed as a result of these reviews will be subject to the usual governance processes and public consultation protocols set by ECC's constitution. No significant changes to bus services or routes are likely to be made before March 2016.

Update

The following update has been provided for the Committee on the Consultation, together with further information set out in the recent press release at the Appendix:

- The consultation is progressing well. Hard copies of the documents have been sent to those Members who requested them, and the Council has over 500 responses from residents already. The consultation runs until the **end of March**.
- The consultation has been provided in various formats to make it accessible to as many people as possible. The consultation has been widely advertised and, in line with the suggestions of the Scrutiny Committee, feedback is being obtained from those residents who do not use buses, as well as those who do.

Next Steps

- £121, 200 was agreed at Outcomes Board on 03/03/15 to fund the first phase of the work that will be needed to actually deliver the Getting Around in Essex strategy.
- Planned activity to set up the Bus Strategy Commissioning Board:
 - The project team will set up and manage the Board and stakeholders,
 - establish the Board and quarterly meetings;
 - set up light touch performance framework for the individual work streams;
 - identify and support task and finish groups; and
 - provide secretariat.
 - The Board will be underpinned by a terms of reference that will set out its scope and responsibilities. The project team is aiming to have the Board in place by May 2015, and it will include County Councillors.

Action Required by the Committee:

That the Committee note the response of the Cabinet Member to the its scrutiny report, together with the update on the ongoing Consultation.

Appendix

PressRelease

Communications PO Box 11, Chelmsford CM1 1LX

03 March 2015

PR 693

Getting around in Essex.

Essex County Council is asking residents to contribute to its on-going bus strategy consultation.

The consultation, called *Getting around in Essex*, will help the council to listen to residents' views on how to improve the county's bus and passenger transport network.

The consultation runs until March 31st. Buses still provide a vital link between communities and help the day-to-day running of the county's businesses, education and health services. The questionnaire will help the council and its partners to review the bus service currently delivered across the county to shape the service to deliver greater economic and social benefits for the people who travel around and work in Essex.

Essex County Councillor Rodney L. Bass, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, said: "This strategy will focus on building long term and sustained partnerships with bus operators to strengthen the network and grow passenger numbers. It will help to review current services, look at getting better value from the transport services Essex County Council supports and reduce overall costs without significantly impacting services."

The consultation focuses on eight areas:

- Better partnership working
- A clearer commitment to quality
- Measures to grow passenger numbers
- Better targeted support for those services that are taxpayer funded
- Better information for customers

- Services that are better tailored to local needs
- Integrated and smart ticketing
- Focused local planning

To read the strategy go to www.essex.gov.uk/busreview. To answer the survey questions visit www.essexinsight.org.uk/consultations and go to 'current consultations' then 'consultation on bus and passenger transport strategy'. Alternatively, contact Healthwatch on 01376 572829 between 10am and 2pm, Monday to Friday except for public holidays to complete the survey over the telephone.

Hard copies of the strategy will be available at local libraries or to request copy of the summary, which includes a paper copy of the survey for you to complete, please call 0845 743 0430 or email contact@essex.gov.uk.

Notes to editor:

Essex County Council provides financial support for nearly 200 bus services either in full or for certain journeys to meet particular needs. These generally run in the evenings, on Sundays and in rural locations.

Most buses (around 85% of the network) running through Essex are provided commercially. This means the Essex County Council does not pay for them and does not determine how or when they run. View a full list of [local bus services](#) supported by Essex County Council.

This consultation does not include the qualification criteria for statutory services such as bus passes or entitlement for statutory transport such as home to school